Japan commits more aid for a peaceful Mindanao

Story Below, Col. 2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
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Saturday, December 13, 2003 ★★ 112 pages 15 sections vol. 19 no. 5 P15

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321
22nd SEA GAMES
VIET NAM
2003
REUTERS

MARATHON CHAMP
Allan Ballester proudly carries the Philippine tricolor during his victory lap after winning the gold medal in the men's marathon race at the 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Hanoi on Friday. His winning time was 2 hours, 21 minutes and 3 seconds. *(See story on Page A26.)*

FPJ takes stand vs globalization

'Ka Ronnie' gives UP forum glimpse of platform

By Norman Bordadora

HE CAME too early for the forum. He saw. He left before it started.

Presidential bet Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday surprised militant farmers and fisherfolk when he showed up at a forum on globalization in the UP Diliman campus.

The organizers, who had been expecting only Poe spokesperson Sen. Vicente Sotto III, ended up being charmed by the movie actor, whose real name is Ronald Allan Poe. They even gave him a new nickname: Ka Ronnie.

In the impromptu half-hour meeting with the militant leaders, Poe also gave a glimpse of what could be his first known political position—an adverse stance against globalization and trade liberalization that gave the groups something to look forward to.

"I heard him tell Ka Paeng (Rafael Mariano, chair of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas) that with regard to agriculture, the country should not participate in trade liberalization until it is prepared to compete," Sotto said.

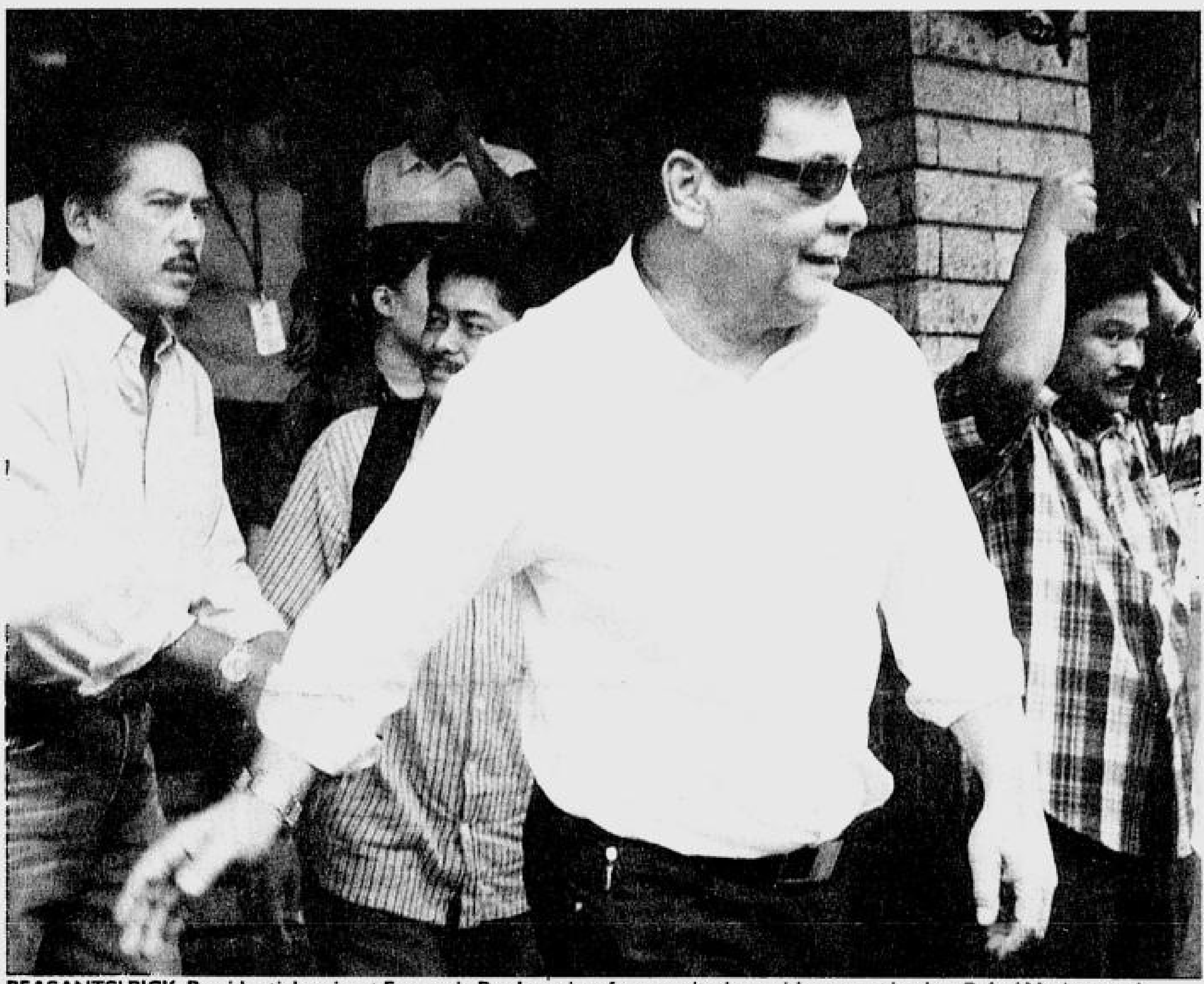
Mariano confirmed what Sotto told the INQUIRER, adding that the opposition candidate gave "strong signals" that he was against the march to liberalization of the agricultural sector unless enough measures were taken to enable the country to compete respectably.

"Yes, he told us of that position against globalization and trade liberalization when we told him about the need to make agriculture the foundation of our country's economy," Mariano said in an interview.

The election-related forum was organized by the KMP, the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas and the labor group Anakpawis.

The exchange between Poe and the militant

FPJ TAKES/ A21


JOAN BONDOC

PEASANTS' PICK: Presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr. arrives for consultations with peasant leaders Rafael Mariano and Danilo Ramos at the UP campus in Diliman. As usual, his friend, Sen. Tito Sotto (left) is left behind to explain the actor's position.

De Castro bid tackled in secret London meet

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

IS THE Senate's Wednesday Group working behind the scenes to get the presidential run of Sen. Noli de Castro going?

De Castro, popularly known as "Kabayan," was the subject of a secret meeting on Dec. 11 between Sen. Joker Arroyo, the perceived leader of the group, and Philippine Ambassador to the Court of St. James Edgardo D. Espiritu in London.

An unimpeachable source told the INQUIRER that the Arroyo-Espiritu meeting discussed the candidacy of De Castro, a member of the Wednesday Group.

The secret meeting came on the heels of an exclusive news report published by the INQUIRER that said De Castro had asked Espiritu last month if the latter would support him if he ran for president.

Although De Castro has still to declare his availability for the presidency or the vice presidency, Espiritu told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview last Wednesday he would not be surprised if the ABS-CBN star broadcaster would do so.

Espiritu, the finance secretary during the Estrada administration,

DE CASTRO/ A21

'Aventajado haggling for ransom cut on tape'

By Armand N. Nocum and Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

THE NEGOTIATIONS for the release of the Sipadan hostages were safely recorded in a micro digital voice recorder, according to a Malaysian who also served as a negotiator.

And a relative of Lepeng Wee's, then President Joseph Estrada's economic adviser for Mindanao, is threatening to make public the tape that supposedly shows chief negotiator Robert Aventajado bargaining for his cut of the P25-million ransom provided by the Malaysian government for the release of nine of its nationals.

The nine were among the 21 people abducted by the Abu Sayyaf from the Sipadan resort in Sabah in April 2000.

Yusof Hamdan, a Malaysian who served as negotiator for the nine Malaysians, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that the "very telling" tape would complete the story of what actually took place during the negotiations.

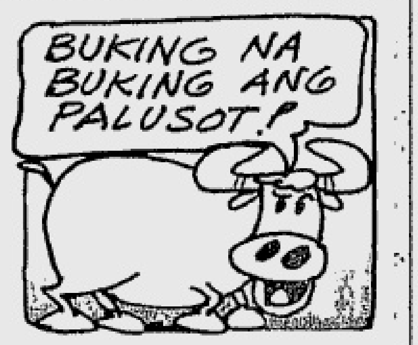
"I have a copy of the voice recording, and other people in the Philippines also have a copy," Hamdan said, adding that the copies were in the possession of key Estrada officials and of a lawmaker.

"It was him [Aventajado] who initiated the violation of the no-ransom policy by asking money from Malaysia," Hamdan said.

Aventajado had earlier accused Wee of advancing P1 million for the release of a Malaysian hostage but getting reimbursed for P2 million. He made the same accusation in his recently launched book, "140 Days of Terror: In the Clutches of the Abu Sayyaf."

Wee is keeping mum on the matter,

AVENTAJADO/ A21



Some gov't workers have all the luck

By Armand Nocum

SOME GRAFTERS in government appear to be luckier than most Filipinos. But is it really luck or plain deviousness?

While ordinary folk could only dream of winning the lottery, several officials at the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Bureau of Customs are claiming to have won huge amounts in lotteries and raffles.

But graft investigators are not buying their stories. In fact, they see a pattern in these supposedly lucky streaks.

SOME/ A9

Customs exceeds goal; eyes record

By Clarissa Batino

HERE'S GOOD news from the Bureau of Customs. The government's second-biggest revenue earner exceeded its full-year collection goal of P100.056 billion last Wednesday.

Now it's aiming to break the bureau's all-time collection record: P104.566 billion, which the agency posted in 1996.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said the bureau needed only to raise P4.361 billion in the remaining days of the year to beat the all-time high.

"We still have 11 collection days to go. We hope we can maintain the surplus level until year-end," Bernardo said.

The agency collected P100.205 billion as of Dec. 10.

The BoC's performance will help the government keep its budget deficit on target.

The government, Asia's largest sovereign debt issuer outside Japan, has said it is confident of meeting its closely watched budget deficit goal this year as it reins in spending.

CUSTOMS/ A9

BISHOP Oscar Solis: Shepherd of a flock of five million in Los Angeles.

Vatican names Novo Ecijano first Fil-Am bishop in US

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE UNITED STATES' first Filipino-American Catholic bishop will help oversee the archdiocese of Los Angeles, one of the largest US Catholic communities with about five million members, the Vatican announced Thursday.

Bishop Oscar Solis, 50, is currently pastor of the St. Joseph Co-Cathedral Thibodaux in Louisiana. He was born and raised in San Jose, Nueva Ecija.

Solis' official ordination by Cardinal Roger Mahony is scheduled on Feb. 10 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels in downtown Los Angeles.

Recently inaugurated, the cathedral is now an awesome landmark of architectural beauty. Lea Salonga is getting married there next month.

Solis will be among the five auxiliary bishops of the archdiocese, home to diverse cultures and host to Sunday Masses held in 42 languages.

"The Filipino community here is very, very proud. We're very happy. It's about time the United States recognized the presence of Filipinos in the country," Fr. Jeremias Jadulco told the INQUIRER yesterday in a phone interview from Los Angeles.

The United States is home to around 2.5 million Filipino workers and migrants.

VATICAN/ A22

Japan vows more aid after gov't peace pact with MILF

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TOKYO, Japan (via PLDT)—The world's second-biggest economy will commit more funds to Mindanao once the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) lays down its arms and strikes a peace accord with the Philippine government, Ambassador to Japan Domingo Siazon said yesterday.

"If we have a successful peace agreement with the MILF, the Japanese government is prepared to come in and support a similar process as they are trying to do in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Iraq. This is a clear message to all of those that would like to separate from the republic that it is better to be one Filipino nation instead of fighting."

On the same day, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation released $19.8 million for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The JBIC money will be used to finance small-scale industries and build social infrastructure in one of the country's poorest regions.

If the peace talks are successful, government officials said they expect more aid from Japan to pour into the region, in the same way the United States is committed to pump in $30 million into Southern Mindanao and the World Bank $40 million in loans.

But aside from providing direct financing to Mindanao, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has also expressed interest in giving special emphasis to the Brunei-In-

JAPAN/ A22

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with rains while Eastern Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread over Eastern Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/13/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

PNP revamp: Berroya is last man standing

By Christian V. Esguerra .

THE CONTROVERSIAL top-to-bottom revamp at the Philippine National Police is almost completed with 11 police officials moving to their new assignments effective last Tuesday.

But Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya remains at his old post of director of the Civil Security Group, the only one of the 32 officers affected by the reshuffle to be so favored.

PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said however that Berroya would be yanked out soon and given a non-PNP post.

Berroya is reportedly being groomed for a key position at the Bureau of Customs.

He and Director Eduardo Matillano, erstwhile chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, were said to be among several officers who asked Malacañang that they be spared from the revamp, resulting in the postponement of the changes in 17 key PNP positions.

This elicited dismayed reactions in the PNP chain of command and criticism about Malacañang's resolve to reform the police organization.

Aside from Matillano, the officers affected in the second wave of the revamp were Chief Superintendents Alfredo de Vera, Jaime Caringal, Servando Hizon, Reynaldo Varilla, Ricardo Quinto, Antonio Billones and Manuel Raval; and Senior Superintendents Arturo Cadac, Geary Barias and Raul Castañeda.

Hizon is the new director of Region 9 (Western Mindanao), Quinto of the Logistics Support Service, Billones of Region 12 (Central Mindanao) and Barias of the Headquarters Support Service. Castañeda has been appointed HSS deputy director.

Like Raval, De Vera has been temporarily assigned to Ebdane's office while waiting for Berroya to be moved out of the CSG.

Caringal lost his post as Calabarzon regional director in favor of Varilla and has been appointed deputy director for operations of the National Capital Region Police Office.

Caringal was supposed to be moved to Region 12 until he publicly complained against the alleged lack of consultation and professionalism of the revamp.

A senior police official privy to the revamp yesterday said Caringal was "forced out of Calabarzon" so Varilla, said to be a trusted lieutenant of the former PNP chief, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, could take his post.

"The NCRPO post was actually meant to appease Caringal," the source said.

But Caringal, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1976, has said he does not want the NCRPO's No. 3 post as there were more senior PMA graduates available for the job.

Senior Supt. Ricardo Dapat, the new chief of the Maritime Group, is another official that Mendoza allegedly succeeded in having appointed, the source said.

CIVIL Relations chief Rey Berroya is reportedly being groomed for a key post at the Bureau of Customs.

"That's the way it is here. Influential people such as Mendoza still have clout over key decisions such as revamps," a PNP official said.

Another source said the latest reshuffle was both a "triumph and loss" for Ebdane.

"Save for the controversy created by Matillano and Berroya, the PNP chief still got most of his wishes in the revamp," the source said.

He said Ebdane wanted Senior Supt. Alex Monteagudo to head the firearms and explosives division but had to accept Cadac at Malacañang's prodding.

Monteagudo belongs to PMA Class 1981 which is considered Ebdane's "favorite" batch.

"The move to take Cadac (PMA Class 1978) was really good because he's much senior to Monteagudo," the official said.

Even if the PNP revamp is almost completed, the PNP leadership could still decide to move officers to new posts even after the moratorium on appointments takes effect on Dec. 15, said Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao, the PNP information officer.

He said new assignments only need to be approved by the Commission on Elections.

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Corpus says Reds have infiltrated PIA

DAVAO CITY—Former spy chief Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus yesterday disclosed that a militant union of government employees, which allegedly serves as front of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has infiltrated the government's propaganda machine.

Corpus, now chief of the military's Civil Relations Group, told reporters that members of the left-leaning Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) now control the Philippine Information Agency.

According to Corpus, he already knew about the "infiltration" since his days at the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP).

Corpus, a former ranking cadre of the New People's Army (NPA), said this was the main reason he was vigorously batting for the restoration of the country's internal security act (ISA).

The ISA, which the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos crafted to thwart the growing communist threat in the '70s, was repealed by former President Corazon Aquino when she assumed power following a bloodless revolt.

A furious Efren Elbanbuena, director of the PIA for Southern Mindanao, lambasted Corpus' statement as highly "irresponsible." "It endangers our situation as employees of PIA," he said.

He challenged Corpus to specify which PIA office was being controlled by communists instead of making sweeping accusations.

Corpus, however, insisted the report was credible although he could not specify an infiltrated PIA office.

Courage coordinator for Southern Mindanao Elizabeth Nuyad said there was a concerted effort by the police and the military to sow a "red scare."

"This is plain harassment to intimidate us from organizing government employees," Nuyad said.

Corpus, known as Ka Erning in the underground movement, urged Congress to reenact the anti-subversion law "so the military can effectively fight the mounting insurgency problem in the country."

But other militant groups warned that the restoration of the ISA would only lead to more human rights violations and summary executions of civilians suspected of being communist sympathizers. *Anthony S. Allada and Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Drilon: No 2nd look at Cha-cha in Senate

By Christine O. Avendaño and Carlito Pablo

SENATE President Franklin Drilon yesterday denied telling Speaker Jose de Venecia the upper chamber would take a "second look" at Charter change because of the possibility of an actor being president for the next six years.

A shift to a parliamentary form of government as proposed under Charter change would greatly curtail the powers of the President.

Drilon said what he told De Venecia was that it would be futile for Congress to push for Charter change at this time.

Not only has Congress run out of time but the "people might look at it as being politically motivated," Drilon said from Bangkok, Thailand, where he is attending a conference.

The "merits of the proposal to shift to a parliamentary system would be lost in the political debate," he said.

Drilon said he told De Venecia all this when the latter called him up on Thursday.

He said this Congress had only 16 session days left before it closed in February.

This, he stressed, was too short a time to hold debates "on the wide-ranging changes the proponents of Charter change want to achieve."

"So it's best that we wait for the next Congress (to tackle Charter change)," he said.

Besides, with the elections less than six months away, "the people might perceive any moves to shift to a parliamentary system as a means to counter (Fernando) Poe Jr.'s popularity," Drilon added.

Poe has been proclaimed the united opposition's presidential bet. But his inexperience in governance has certain sectors of society fearful of what a Poe administration would bring.

The House under De Venecia had earlier passed a resolution endorsing the convening of Congress into a Constituent assembly in order to make amendments to the 1987 Constitution. Among the changes being pushed is a shift from the presidential to the parliamentary form of government.

But Drilon and most of the senators had expressed a preference for a Constitutional convention to make changes to the Charter, with its delegates elected during the May 2004 polls.

Earlier, a ranking government official said Drilon and Sen. Manuel Villar had separately promised De Venecia they would open Senate debates on the proposal to convene Congress into a Constituent assembly.

"We'll have the final push for Charter change between Jan. 10 and 20," the source, who asked not to be identified, had said.

"It's that or we might have either FPJ or Kabayan for President, the source had added, referring to Poe and broadcaster-turned-senator Noli de Castro, who are leading the presidential surveys.

Under a parliamentary set-up, the President's powers are clipped. The day-to-day running of the government is left to the prime minister and the Cabinet.

TOKYO CHEERS
President Macapagal joins other Asean leaders in a toast during a dinner hosted by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at a Tokyo hotel on Thursday. With GMA are, from left, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Myanmar Prime Minister Khin Nyunt and Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. The four are wearing "happi," a traditional Japanese half coat, and drinking rice wine from a "masu," a wooden sake cup. AFP

GMA says celebrity factor not enough

TOKYO—It may have helped sweep Arnold Schwarzenegger to office. And it was undeniably a factor in bringing her own predecessor a huge victory at the polls.

But President Macapagal said Friday her nation is too wise to vote her out of office just because her opponent is an action movie star.

"Personality is obviously a factor," she told a small group of journalists in Tokyo Friday after the closing of the two-day Japan-Asean summit. "But at the end of the day, they want more than personality."

Arroyo was referring to action film star Fernando Poe Jr., who announced last month he will run for president in next May's election.

"I believe the voters have great wisdom, and will focus on experience and accomplishments over personality," Arroyo said.

AP

Loren agonizes: Veep or Senate?

NARVACAN, Ilocos Sur—Sen. Loren Legarda said she is "agonizing" whether to run for vice president or seek reelection.

"I'm No. 1 in the survey (among the senatorial aspirants). It's not costly (if I run for senator); it's not even too tiring and at the same time I can serve the country," Legarda told reporters here on Thursday.

She admitted, however, that running for vice president is more challenging and exhausting.

"The fight is tougher, more costly, more tiring. But there is a risk. I can serve in another capacity and I will accept the challenge (to be the running mate of any presidential candidate)," she said.

Legarda said all presidential aspirants, including President Macapagal, had offered her to be their running mate. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

No queues for Imelda

BEING an ex-First Lady, even one faced with multiple graft cases, still counts for something.

Imelda Marcos, the widow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, yesterday skipped the snaking queues by going directly to the Commission on Elections offices in Intramuros to have her registration validated—the only voter known to have done so.

Marcos headed straight for the office of Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, who chairs the validation program.

Tancangco was not around when Imelda arrived at about 8:30 a.m., but Imelda still got the royal treatment from her staff.

She was given her own validating machine to make the process easier, quicker.

Other people have to queue as early as 5 a.m. to make sure they get their validation done in a few hours.

The validation process that started on Aug. 4 ended yesterday. *Blanche S. Rivera*

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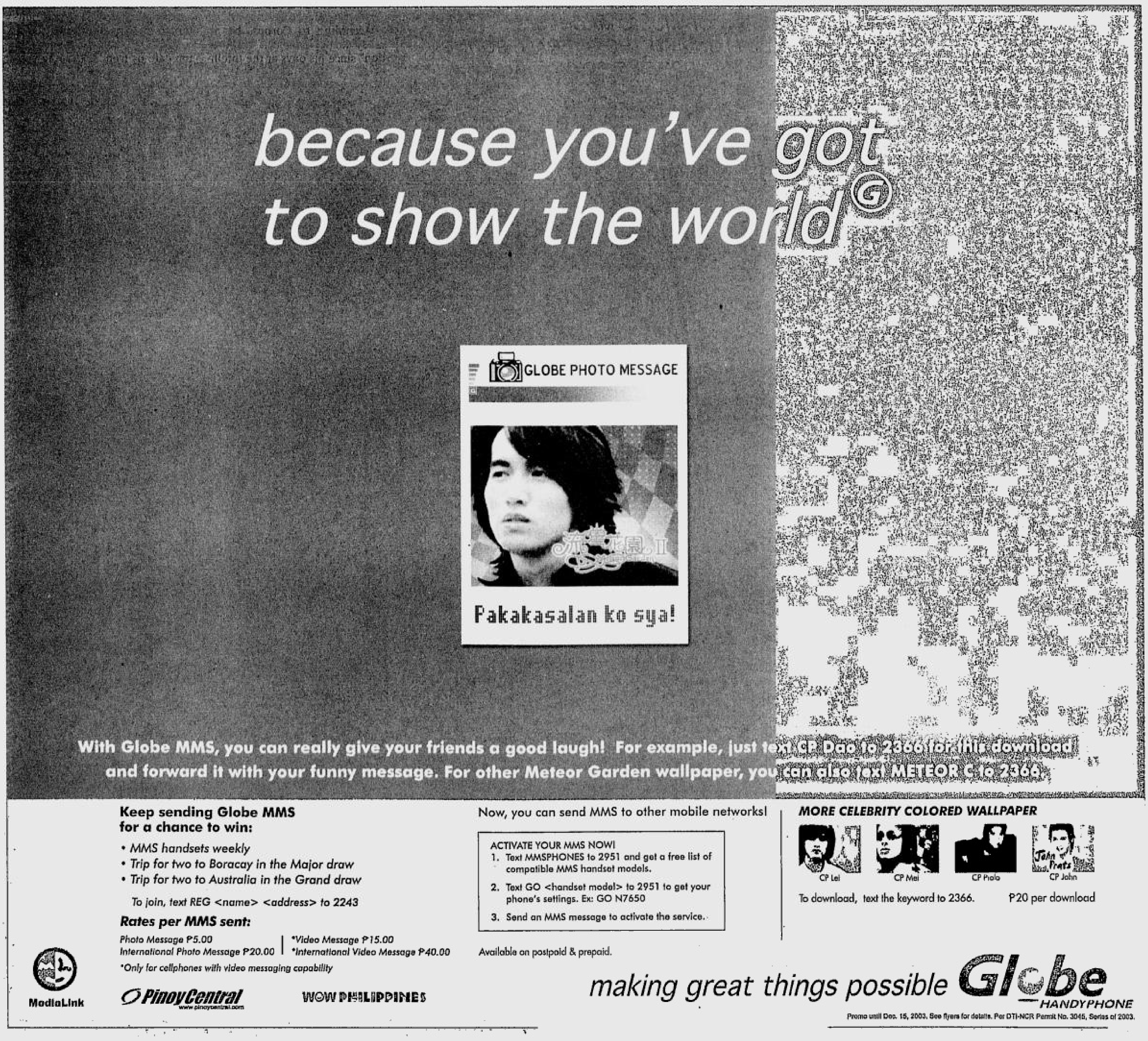

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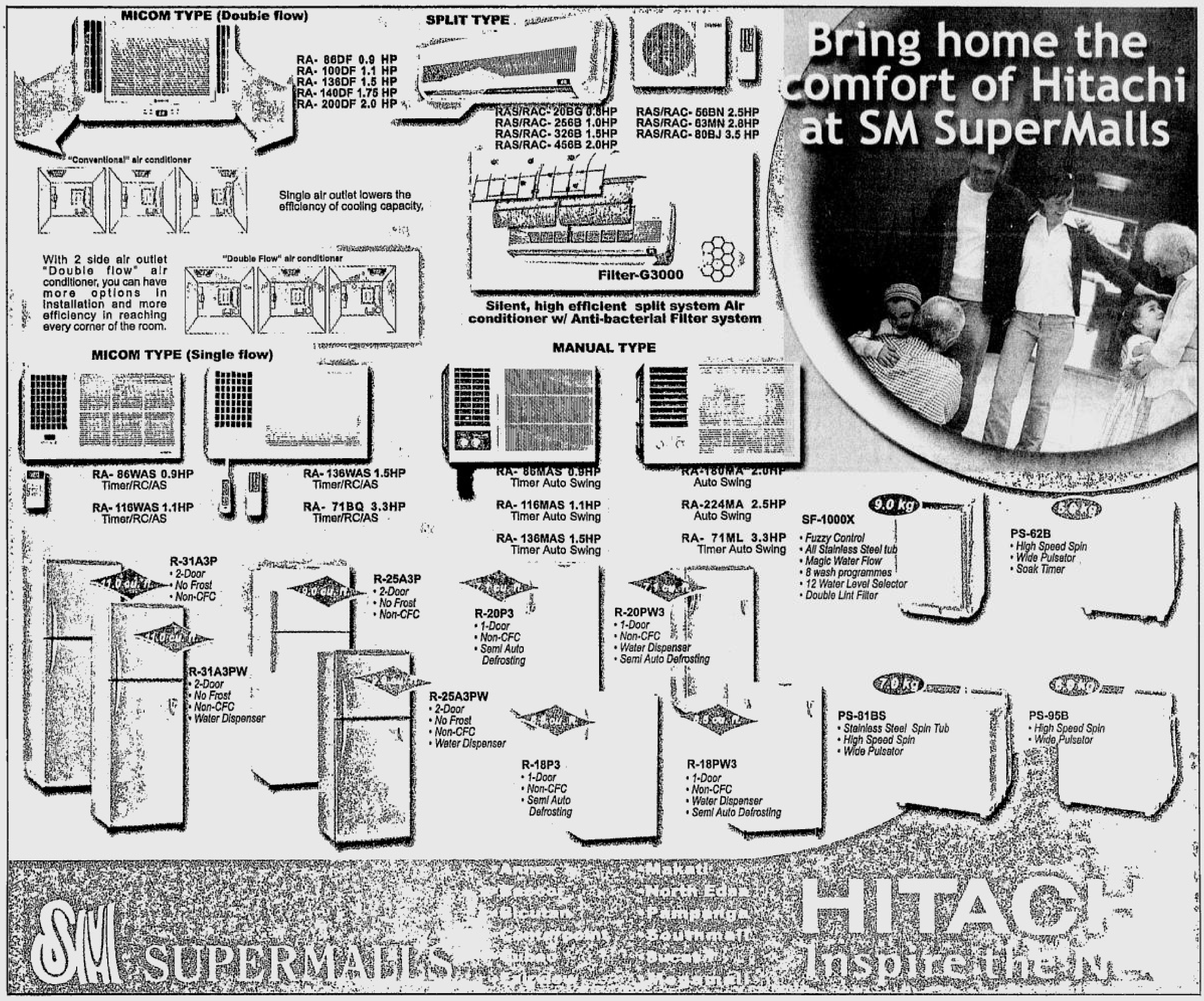

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RA- 71BQ 3.3HP
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MANUAL TYPE

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Timer Auto Swing

RA- 116MAS 1.1HP
Timer Auto Swing

RA- 136MAS 1.5HP
Timer Auto Swing

RA-180MA 2.0HP
Auto Swing

RA-224MA 2.5HP
Auto Swing

RA- 71ML 3.3HP
Timer Auto Swing

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R-31A3PW
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- No Frost
- Non-CFC
- Water Dispenser

R-25A3P
- 2-Door
- No Frost
- Non-CFC

R-25A3PW
- 2-Door
- No Frost
- Non-CFC
- Water Dispenser

R-20P3
- 1-Door
- Non-CFC
- Semi Auto Defrosting

R-20PW3
- 1-Door
- Non-CFC
- Water Dispenser
- Semi Auto Defrosting

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9am to 5pm **CONVENTION EXHIBITS & INFORMATION BOOTHS**
PICC Secretariat Bldg. (2nd Flr.)

December 15 (Monday)

9am to 5pm **REGISTRATION**
PICC Secretariat Bldg. (2nd Flr.)

OPTIONAL TOURS

7-11pm **NOCHE BUENA**
Welcome Reception
Hosted by DOT
Cuartel de Sta. Lucia
(PC Barracks), Intramuros

COMPLIMENTARY TOUR OF INTRAMUROS & RIZAL: BAGUMBAYAN LIGHT & SOUND MUSEUM
Sta. Lucia Street, Intramuros

December 16 (Tuesday)

from 7am **REGISTRATION**
PICC Secretariat Bldg. (2nd Flr.)

8:30am **OPENING CEREMONY**
PICC Secretariat Bldg.
Meeting Room 5 (2nd Flr.)

INVOCATION
Hon. David A. Pendleton
Member, State of Hawaii House of Representatives

"Banging of the Gong": Opening of the Convention
Presiding Officers:
- Hon. Heherson T. Alvarez
  Presidential Adviser on Overseas Filipino Communities
- Hon. Richard J. Gordon
  Secretary, Department of Tourism
- Hon. Patricia Sto. Tomas
  Secretary, Department of Labor & Employment
- Mrs. Mina T. Gabor
  President, Philippine Small & Medium Business Development Foundation (Philsmed)

Keynote Address
Hon. Richard J. Gordon

9:50am **PLENARY SESSION I**

The Impact of Micro Finance
Ms. Loida Nicolas-Lewis
Chair/CEO, TLC Beatrice Int'l. Food

Leisure & Retirement in the Philippines
Governor Antonio J. Leviste, Jr.
Chairman, Philippine Leisure & Retirement Authority

The Challenges We Face
Mr. Alex A. Esclamado
Founding National Chair, National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)

11:20am **PLENARY SESSION II**
Presentation on Best Practices: Centers of Activities

The Hawaii Fil-Am Center Model (Honolulu)
Hon. Ron Menor
Senator of Hawaii State Legislature USA

Northside Community Center Model (San Jose, California)
Mr. Ben Menor, Jr.
President & CEO, Filipino American Community Development Council, Inc. Northside Community Center

Elevating Filipino Image through World Class Competition
Mr. Angelo Barretto
International Race Car Champion
Le Mans Classic France

Linking Overseas Filipinos To Philippine Cultural Heritage
Ms. Cecile Guidote-Alvarez
Chairperson, International Theater Institute of the Philippines

12:30pm **POWER LUNCH**
Hosted by BPI
PICC Banquet Hall (2nd Flr.)

1:40pm **POWER MESSAGE**
Hon. Fidel V. Ramos
Former President
Republic of the Philippines

2:10pm **PLENARY SESSION III**

Aero Political Issues
Mr. Avelino L. Zapanta
President & CEO, Philippine Airlines

The Role of Physicians in Community Life
Dr. Jose Evangelista
Past President, Association of Philippine Physicians in America (APPA)

Government, Academia, Human Services, & Grassroots Organizing: Collective Power to Change and Activism in the Service of Women & Children
Hon. Velma Veloria
Representative, 11th District
State of Washington, U.S.A.

Ms.Emma Catague
Program Manager - Community Organizing Asian and Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center
Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.

3:45 to 6pm **BREAKOUT SECTORAL FORA (Simultaneous)**
PICC Meeting Rooms 2,3, 5, 6, 7 & 8 (2nd Flr.)
The various sectoral fora provide a venue for the sharing of knowledge, technology and experiences. The fora will discuss issues and concerns that mutually impact on Filipinos here and abroad. From the discussions will arise common resolutions that will be concretized into specific programs of action.

- **Economic Forum**
  The increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and finance, has highlighted the importance of addressing economic issues affecting Global Filipinos.
  Convenor : Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry
  Co-Convenor : NaFFAA

- **Youth Forum**
  With the theme, "Overseas Filipino Youth: Defining Filipino Heritage for Unity, Empowerment and Progress in the Face of Globalization," this forum will discuss how Filipino youth here and abroad can be mobilized towards community involvement, volunteerism and participation in environment preservation and promotion of eco-tourism. The forum likewise aims to re-introduce Filipino heritage to overseas youth and developing cultural exchanges to ensure the vibrancy of Filipino heritage.
  Convenor : Commission on Filipinos Overseas
  Co-Convenors : National Youth Commission & NaFFAA

- **Social Development Forum**
  This forum seeks to establish a support system for impoverished communities in the Philippines. It aims to organize civic-minded individuals or groups according to provinces and initiate sustained support of much-needed projects in their respective barangays, towns or provinces. Assistance may be channeled to project concerning infrastructure, business and livelihood, humanitarian, medical, cultural/ historical, or other areas deemed of utmost importance to the concerned locality.
  Convenor : Ayala Foundation, Inc.
  Co-Convenors : ABS-CBN Foundation League of Corporate Foundations

- **Health & Medical Forum**
  Undoubtedly, Filipinos are one of the most sought after resources in countries requiring highly competent health and medical practitioners. Filipino nurses and doctors are known not only for their high level of skill, but also for the sincere care and treatment of patients. One of the topics that will be tackled is on the health care profession -- opportunities and updates on entry regulations. Another topic is the impact of medical missions -- cause, concerns and controversies.
  Convenor : Philippine Medical Association
  Co-Convenor : Philippine Nurses' Association

- **Tourism Forum**
  The renewed focus on tourism has come to mean important jobs and livelihood for Filipinos. Recognizing the major role that Global Filipinos play in promoting the Philippines as a world-class destination, the Tourism Forum will focus on what they can do to help in bringing more visitors to the country.
  Convenor : Department of Tourism

- **Media Forum**
  This forum will tackle the role and responsibilities of Philippine media, both overseas and local, as the principal source of news about the Philippines. The concept of a Global Filipino Media Association will likewise be discussed to develop and harness a worldwide network that can help change the country's image and promote the Filipinos' interests both locally and overseas.
  Convenor : NaFFAA

December 17 (Wednesday)

9am **CLOSING CEREMONY**
PICC Meeting Room 5 (2nd Flr.)

Opening Remarks
Hon. Heherson T. Alvarez

Hon. Richard J. Gordon

Presentation of Resolutions
Mrs. Mina T. Gabor

Keynote Address
Hon. Teofisto Guingona, Jr.
Vice President
Republic of the Philippines

Discussion & Approval of the Proposed Global Confederation of Filipino Associations

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DOJ: 5 more Kuratong witnesses

By Philip C. Tubeza

FIVE more state witnesses are expected to surface soon to pin down opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson and 33 other police officers for their alleged involvement in the Kuratong Baleleng murder case, the Department of Justice said yesterday.

Acting Justice Secretary Jose Calida said the five new witnesses are in addition to the four other witnesses, whose names have been announced before, and presented to the media.

"(With these developments), we are confident that (Quezon City) Judge (Theresa) Yadao would not only inhibit herself but also change her mind regarding her decision," he added.

Special Action Force members Senior Insp. Marlon Sapla, P02 Gerald Antolin, P03 Leonilo Ancheta, and SP01 Loreto Valle joined Chief Insp. Ismael Yu, who surfaced earlier, all claim that eight of the 11 suspected Kuratong members killed in Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City on May 18, 1995 were captured alive the night before during a raid at Superville Subdivision in Parañaque.

"This is important because it shows that there was no shootout along Commonwealth Avenue. The eight were captured alive and were brought to Camp Crame. If these [suspects] came from Camp Crame, how could there have been a shootout in Commonwealth?" Calida told reporters.

Calida said the families of the five policemen have been placed under the Witness Protection Program.

The government case suffered a setback after Yadao dismissed the charges against Lacson and the others for lack of probable cause.

The government has appealed the case and asked Yadao to inhibit herself from the case.

Yu said they were part of two PNP-SAF teams that raided the Kuratong Baleleng safehouse at Palm Street in Superville on the night of May 17 "on the orders" of Lacson, then Senior Supt. Romeo Acop, Gen. Jewel Canson, and Senior Supt. Francisco Zubia.

They said the two teams apprehended eight Kuratong suspects and turned them over to the men of Lacson, Acop, Canson and Zubia. They said the four officers even went inside the house after the raid.

The witnesses said they were later surprised to learn that the eight suspects were killed in an alleged shootout. They noted that the suspects were killed in the two Mitsubishi L-300 vans recovered earlier at Superville.

"When we turned over the eight Kuratong suspects arrested at Superville, they were not only alive, they were unarmed and defenseless. There could not have been a shootout," Yu said.

Tip to 'hotline' leads to fall of No. 4 kidnapper

A TIP relayed through the Department of Interior and Local Government's "117 Text and Call Hotline." on the whereabouts of a notorious kidnap-for-ransom gang leader led to the latter's arrest.

DILG Secretary Jose Lina Jr. said an informant identified only as "Mits" called up a DILG 117 operator last Dec. 3 to say that Allan Niegas, the country's fourth most wanted kidnapper, was sighted in Capoocan, Leyte.

Lina said the hotline operator immediately informed the authorities.

Local police in Capoocan, Leyte, later arrested Niegas, who has a P1-million bounty on his head. But he denied the accusations, saying the police framed him up and was himself a victim of kidnapping. *Nelson F. Flores*

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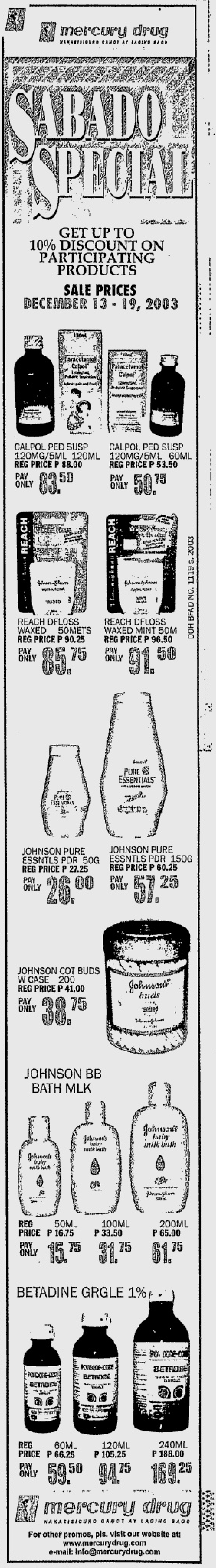

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El Shaddai on GMA endorsement: It is still too early

By Norman Bordadora and Carlito Pablo

THE EL SHADDAI Catholic charismatic group yesterday denied it had decided to cast its lot with President Macapagal-Arroyo in next year's polls.

El Shaddai spokesperson Mel Robles told the INQUIRER the issue of a presidential endorsement was a divisive one that the organization did not need to address at this time.

"The elections are still quite far off. There is a time for everything and now is not the time for political endorsements," Robles said in a phone interview.

He did admit, however, that the El Shaddai under its leader Bro. Mike Velarde was supportive of the administration.

"Bro. Mike Velarde and El Shaddai are in fact supporting the presidency and the President's program of reconciliation and unity," he said.

"But it is still too early to talk about the elections," he added.

"I don't know of any decision already made (by the El Shaddai) to support any particular candidate. The official position right now is the elections are still so far off to make any statement of support or endorsement."

This after a well-placed administration source yesterday told the INQUIRER that Malacañang had secured the support of the millions-strong El Shaddai movement that votes as a bloc.

The source, who asked not to be named, said this bloc was good for two to three million votes and would be the "foil" to the Iglesia ni Cristo bloc, which is estimated to be about two million votes.

VELARDE: A divisive issue

The source said Malacañang believes the INC vote has been pledged to Sen. Panfilo Lacson, one of the opposition's presidential aspirants.

"The promise of the INC vote is what's keeping Lacson from withdrawing from the race in favor of Fernando Poe Jr.," said the source.

Poe and Lacson are contesting the opposition's endorsement to be its standard-bearer in 2004.

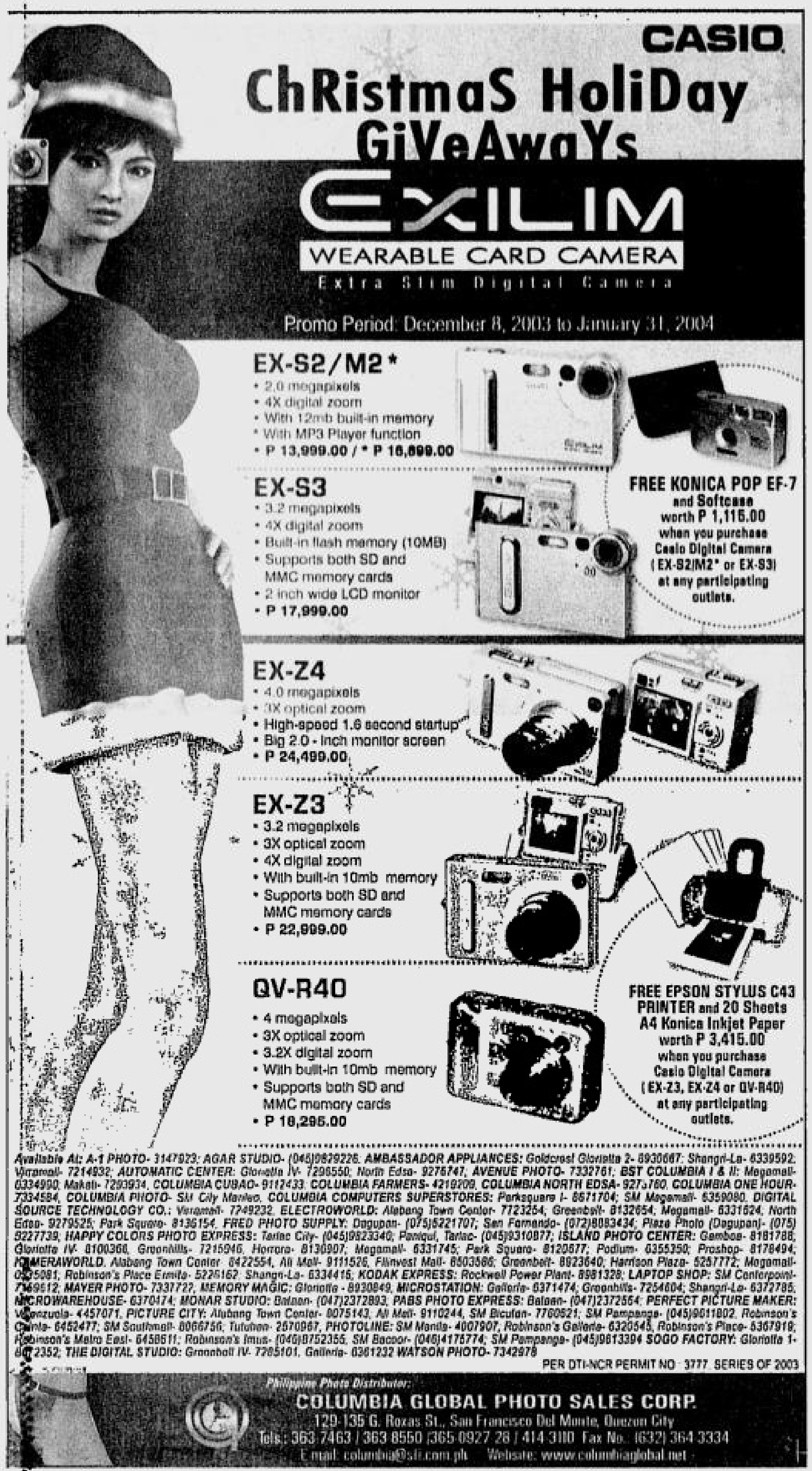
But certain quarters in Malacañang were working to gain the backing of the INC for Ms Macapagal, the source said.

It will be recalled that ex-President Joseph Estrada handily won the 1998 elections after both the El Shaddai and the INC threw their support behind him.

But the source said another religious sect could be the trump card in the battle for the religious vote.

"President Macapagal is counting on the Jesus is Lord Movement vote and this could affect the overall race," the source said.

JIL head Bro. Eddie Villanueva, however, is said to be seriously contemplating a run for the presidency himself on the strength of his sect's estimated 1.5-million membership.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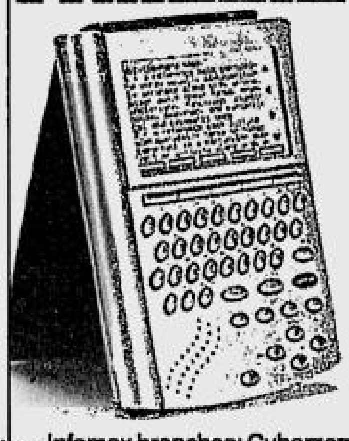
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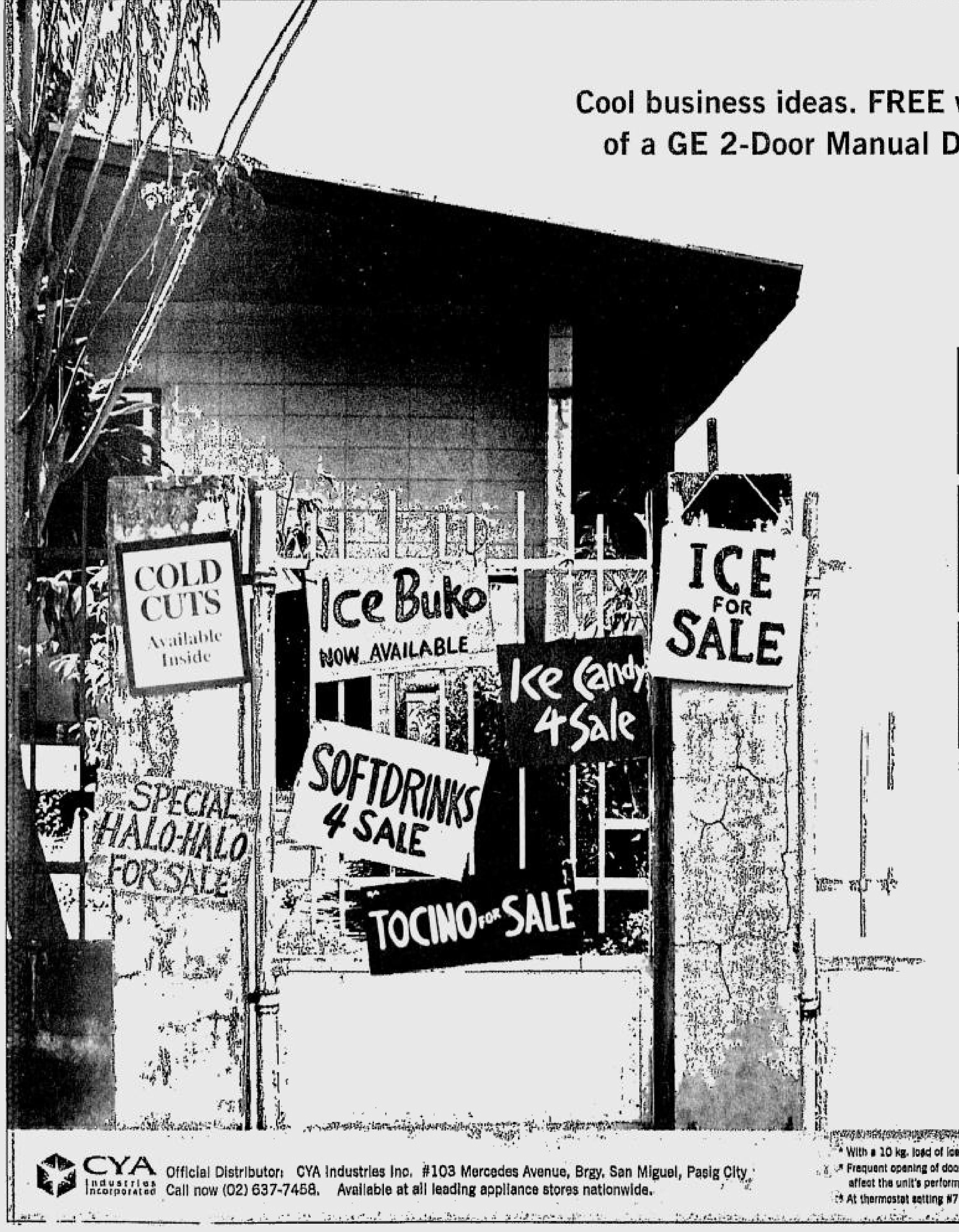

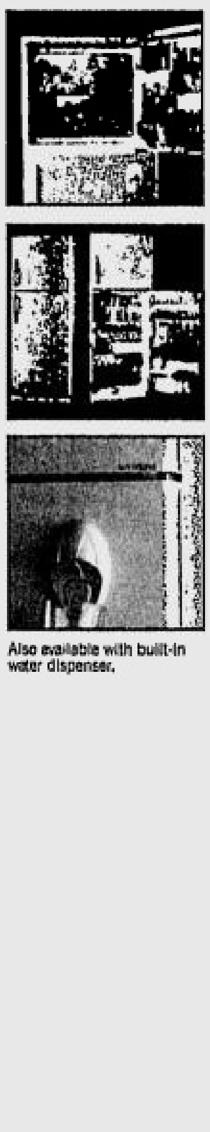
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Gov't expects to get its hands very soon on $683-M Marcos loot

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE GOVERNMENT expects to get its hands very soon on the $683-million Marcos Swiss deposits which the Supreme Court last month forfeited in its favor.

Sources at the Presidential Commission on Good Government said the agency expects the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court to come out next week with a writ of execution that would begin the transfer of the funds to the National Treasury.

However, Malacañang has yet to issue the guidelines to ensure that the funds will not be used for other purposes than agrarian reform.

According to PCGG Commissioner Vyva Aguirre, the main guideline for protecting the funds is the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law which prescribes that all ill-gotten wealth recovered from the family of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies go to agrarian reform.

The funds, though invested abroad, are being held in an escrow account at the Philippine National Bank.

According to the escrow agreement set by the Swiss federal court, the PNB can only release the money when the Supreme Court makes a final ruling on its ownership.

The high tribunal did so last July 15, declaring the Marcos Swiss deposits to be ill-gotten. It affirmed its decision last Nov. 18.

But the Sandiganbayan, the original court that handled the forfeiture case, has not so far issued the order to execute the judgment.

Aguirre said that from the PNB, the money would go into a "special fund" in the National Treasury earmarked for agrarian reform.

But the budget department has also appropriated in its books about P8 billion from the funds for the compensation of the victims of human rights abuses of the Marcos regime.

One of the conditions that the Swiss courts set for releasing the Marcos deposits was that a portion of the money would be used to compensate the rights abuse victims.

Congress is now debating a compensation bill proposing to use P10 billion of the money to compensate the victims.

"We hope Congress would hurry up with the compensation law," said Aguirre.

There is concern that Congress will not be able to pass the law before the May elections.

The PNB meanwhile is still trying to recover the $22 million out of the $683 million that is being withheld by the German bank West LB's branch in Singapore.

The bank wants a court in Singapore to decide first who owns the money before it releases it.

The PCGG's principal Swiss lawyer, Sergio Salvioni, is in Manila to discuss the payment of their legal fees, and strategies to go after other suspected ill-gotten assets of the Marcoses in Europe.

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Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

GUIDELINES ON THE FILING OF CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY AND NOMINATION OF OFFICIAL CANDIDATES OF REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 10, 2004 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.
X---------------------x

PRESENT:

ABALOS, Benjamin, Sr. S.	Chairman
TANCANGCO, Luzviminda G.	Commissioner
JAVIER, Rufino S.B.	Commissioner
LANTION, Ralph C.	Commissioner
SADAIN, Mehol K.	Commissioner
BORRA, Resurreccion Z.	Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino, Jr. A.	Commissioner

Promulgated: 10 December 2003

RESOLUTION NO. 6453

The Commission on Elections, by virtue of the power vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, and other election laws, RESOLVED to promulgate as it hereby promulgates, the following rules and guidelines on the filing of certificates of candidacy and nomination of official candidates of registered political parties in connection with the May 10, 2004 National and Local Elections.

SECTION 1. ***Certificate of Candidacy.*** - a) No person shall be elected President, Vice-President, Senator, Member of the House of Representatives, Provincial, City or Municipal official unless he files personally or his duly authorized representative a sworn certificate of candidacy with the respective offices provided under Section 3 hereof in the form prescribed by the Commission and within the period fixed herein.

b) No person shall be eligible for more than one office to be filled in the same election. If he files a certificate of candidacy for more than one office he shall not be eligible for either. However, before the expiration of the period for the filing of certificate of candidacy or on or before midnight of January 2, 2004, he may declare under oath the office for which he desires to be eligible and cancel the certificate of candidacy for other office/s. Said declaration shall be filed personally or, through his duly authorized representative with the proper office in accordance with Sec. 3 hereof. The authority of the representative must be in writing and under oath, and shall be attached to the aforementioned written declaration.

c) A person who has filed a certificate of candidacy may, prior to the election, withdraw the same pursuant to Section 13 hereof.

d) The filing of a withdrawal of a certificate of candidacy shall not affect whatever civil, criminal or administrative liabilities a candidate may have incurred.

SEC. 2. ***Contents of certificate of candidacy.*** - The certificate of candidacy shall be under oath and shall state that the person filing it is announcing his candidacy for the office and constituency stated therein; that he is eligible for said office, his age, sex, civil status, place and date of birth, his citizenship, whether natural-born or naturalized; the registered political party to which he belongs; if married, the full name of the spouse; his legal residence, giving the exact address; the precinct number, barangay, city or municipality and province where he is registered voter; his post office address for election purposes; his profession or occupation or employment; that he will support and defend the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines and will maintain true faith and allegiance thereto; that he will obey the laws, legal orders, decrees, resolution , rules and regulations promulgated and issued by the duly-constituted authorities; that he is not a permanent resident or immigrant to a foreign country; that he assumes the foregoing obligations voluntarily without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that the facts stated in the certificate are true and correct to the best of his own knowledge.

He shall affix his signature, thumbmark and his latest passport size photograph on the upper-right hand margin thereof; and if he so desires, a statement, in duplicate in not more than one hundred words, containing his bio-data and program of government.

The person filing the certificate of candidacy may include one nickname or stage name by which he is generally or popularly known in the locality; Provided: That no candidate shall use the nickname, stage name or initials of another. In case of several nicknames or stage names, only the nickname or stage name first written shall be considered.

Titles, such as DON, DATU, DOCTOR, GINOO, or words of similar imports shall not be allowed.

SEC. 3. - ***Where to file certificate of candidacy.*** - The certificate of candidacy shall be filed in FIVE (5) LEGIBLE COPIES with the offices of the Commission specified hereunder:

A. Law Department, Commission on Elections
   For President, Vice-President and Senator;

B. Regional Election Director
   For Members of the House of Representatives for legislative districts in the National Capital region (NCR);

C. Provincial Election Supervisor concerned:

   1. Members of the House of Representatives of legislative districts in provinces;
   2. For provincial officials,

D. City Election Officer concerned designated for the purpose by the Regional Election Director.

   1. Members of the House of Representatives for legislative districts in cities outside the NCR, which comprise one or more legislative districts;

   2. For City Officials of cities with more than one election officer.
      Copies of the designation of the Election Officer concerned shall immediately be submitted to the Law Department of the Commission;

E. City/ Municipality Election Officer concerned For City/ Municipal Officials

The certificate of candidacy shall be filed by the candidate personally or by his duly authorized representative. No certificate of candidacy shall be filed or accepted by mail, telegram or facsimile. The authority of the representative shall be in writing and under oath which shall be attached to the certificate of candidacy.

Certificate of candidacy not filed with the correct offices as enumerated above shall not be accepted.

The filing of certificate of candidacy of a substitute candidate, in case of valid substitution, shall be filed in accordance with Section 13 hereof.

The form of the certificate of candidacy shall be distributed free of charge, and no filing fee shall be imposed.

SEC. 4. ***Effects of Filing Certificates of Candidacy.*** - a) Any person holding a public appointive office or position including active members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and other officers and employees in government-owned or controlled corporations, shall be considered *ipso facto* resigned from his office upon the filing of his certificate of candidacy. b) Any person holding an elective office or position running for any elective office or position shall not be considered resigned.

SEC. 5. ***Period for filing certificate of candidacy.*** - The certificate of candidacy shall be filed beginning December 15, 2003 to January 2, 2004 for both national and local elective positions on regular days during office hours except on the last day which shall be up to midnight.

No certificate of candidacy and/or party nomination shall be received after 12:00 o'clock midnight of January 2, 2004, except in cases of proper and valid substitution under Section 14 hereof.

SEC. 6. ***Certificate of nomination of official candidates by political party.*** - The certificate of nomination of registered political parties or coalitions of political parties of their official candidates shall be filed not later than the last day for filing of certificates of candidacy, which is January 2, 2004 duly signed and attested under oath by the party president, chairman, secretary-general or any other duly authorized officer and shall bear the acceptance of the nominee by affixing his signature in the space provided therein. If the certificate of nomination of a candidate is filed within the period for filing of certificate of nominations but after his certificate of candidacy has been filed, a copy of the latter shall be attached to the former.

For this purpose, all registered political parties shall submit to the Law Department not later than December 15, 2003, the authorized signatories to official nominations of their respective candidates.

No certificate of nomination or any amendment thereto shall be filed after the last day for filing of certificate of candidacy, except in case of valid substitution under Section 14 hereof.

No political party shall be allowed to nominate candidates more than the number of persons required to be voted for in an elective position. In such a situation, all of the nominations shall be denied due course by the Commission.

Political Parties are enjoined to decide on who will be their official candidates, otherwise all nominees shall be considered independent candidates.

SEC. 7. ***Effect of filing certificate of nomination.*** - A candidate who has not been nominated by a registered political party or its duly authorized representative, or whose nomination has not been submitted by a registered political party, or who accepts nominations from more than one registered political party, nomination of several candidates by a political party for the same position or in excess of the number of persons required to be noted for an elective position, except in cases of coalitions of said political parties, or whose nomination was filed after the last day of filing of certificates of candidacy, shall be considered as an independent candidate.

In such a situation the Political Parties shall, not later than January 9, 2004, submit in writing its official candidates otherwise all the nominees in question shall be considered independent candidates.

SEC. 8. Ministerial duty of receiving and acknowledging receipt of certificates of candidacy/nomination; Recording. - The receiving officer as provided for in Section 3 hereof shall have the ministerial duty to receive and acknowledge receipt of the certificates of candidacy/nomination by registered political parties or coalition of political parties on or before January 2, 2004, the deadline for filing of certificates of candidacy. He shall stamp every copy of each certificate with the date and time of its receipt and affix his signature thereon.

Thereafter, he shall enter in a record book, the following data, leaving no space between entries: a) date and time of receipt of the certificates; b) assigned consecutive number thereof; c) full name of the candidate; d) the office for which the candidate is running; e) the political party to which the candidate belongs and/or which nominated him, if any; f) the number of copies actually received; and g) the name of the officer or employee who received the certificate.

Immediately after 12:00 o'clock midnight of January 2, 2004, the receiving official shall close the record book by placing a line immediately after the last entry and writing the word "closed". He shall then affix his signature immediately below the word "closed" and indicate the date and exact time of closing.

SEC. 9. ***Watchers of candidates, political parties and accredited citizens' arms.*** - Any candidate, political party, accredited citizens arm may appoint a watcher in connection with the filing and reception of the certificates of candidacy. The watcher shall be allowed to stay within the premises of the authorized receiving office and to take note of the proceedings but without interrupting or disturbing official business. Any watcher may report in writing to the Commission any irregularity, which may require appropriate action.

Watchers shall be entitled, upon written request, to secure from the receiving officer a copy of the full list of those who filed their certificates of candidacy and their respective positions.

SEC. 10. - Reports on the delivery of certificates of candidacy. - On January 3, 2004 the receiving officer shall report, by rush telegram or any available fastest means of communication to the Commission through the Law Department, a complete list of candidates who have filed their certificates of candidacy as entered in the record book.

Within forty-eight (48) hours, the record book containing the record of certificates of candidacy/nomination received, list of candidates and all copies of the certificates of candidacy/ nomination filed with the offices as provided in Section 3 hereof, shall, except one copy to be retained for file, be delivered personally to the Law Department, Commission in Manila by the following:

1. Regional Election Director. - For Member of the House of Representatives in the legislative districts in the National Capital Region;

2. Provincial Election Supervisor - For member of the House of Representatives and provincial, city and municipal positions outside the National Capital Region;

   For this purpose, the Election Officers concerned shall deliver the copies of certificates of candidacy/nomination for city and municipal positions to his Provincial Election Supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours from January 2, 2004.

3. City/Municipal Election Officer - For city and municipal positions in the National Capital Region.

SEC. 11. ***Distribution of Certificates of Candidacy.*** - Copies of the certificate of candidacy shall be distributed as follows:

Original copy, to the Law Department, COMELEC, Manila;
Second copy, to ERSD, Comelec, Manila;
Third copy, Project Director, Phase II Modernization, Comelec, Manila;
Fourth copy, Office of the Chairman; and
Fifth copy, to be retained by the Election Officer, or Provincial Election Supervisor, or Regional Election Director, for his file.

SEC. 12. - ***Preparation of the Certified List of Candidates.*** - Immediately after the last day of filing of certificates of candidacy, the certified list of candidates shall be prepared by election officials/ department concerned as follows:

A. Law Department
   For President, Vice-President, and Senators;
B. Regional Election Director concerned
   For Members of the House of Representatives in the legislative districts in the National Capital Region;
C. Provincial Election Supervisor concerned
   For Members of the House of Representatives in legislative districts in provinces, and provincial officials;
D. City/Municipality Election Officer concerned
   For city and municipal positions in the National Capital Region; and
   For city and municipal positions outside of the National Capital Region.
   For Members of the House of Representatives in legislative districts in highly urbanized cities outside of NCR.

In all cases, the above-mentioned department/election officials shall submit a printed copy of the certified lists including the diskette/CD containing said data to the Project Director of Phase II, Modernization Project.

SEC. 13. ***Withdrawal of Certificate of Candidacy.*** - Any person who has filed a certificate of candidacy may at any time before election day file personally or by his duly authorized representative, a statement of withdrawal under oath in five (5) legible copies with the office where the certificate of candidacy was filed. No statement of withdrawal shall be accepted if filed by mail, telegram or facsimile. The authority of the representative shall be in writing and under oath which shall be attached to the statement of withdrawal.

The Regional Election Director, Provincial Election Supervisor, or the Election Officer concerned shall , upon receipt of the withdrawal, notify the Law Department by the fastest means of communication of the a) full name of the candidate withdrawing; b) elective office concerned; c) political party, if any; and d) substitution made, if any.

On the same date, he shall retain a file copy and immediately forward to the Commission through the Law Department all the other copies, furnishing thereof the Project Director of Phase II, Modernization Project.

For any withdrawal of candidacy and/or substitution filed with the Commission, the field office concerned and the Project Director of Phase II shall be notified.

SEC. 14. ***Substitution of Candidates, in case of death, disqualification or withdrawal of another.*** - . If after the last day for filing of certificate of candidacy, an official candidate of a registered political party dies, withdraws or is disqualified for any cause, he may be substituted by a candidate belonging to, and nominated by, the same political party. No substitute shall be allowed for any independent candidate. In cases of withdrawal or disqualification of a candidate, the substitute candidate nominated by the political party concerned may file his certificate of candidacy and nomination not later than January 15, 2004. In case of death or permanent incapacity, the substitute candidate may file his certificate of candidacy with the office herein provided not later than mid-day of election day. If death or permanent incapacity should occur between the day before election and mid-day of election day, the substitute candidate may file the certificate with any board of election inspectors in the political subdivision where he is a candidate, or in the case of candidates for President, Vice-President or Senator, with the Law Department of the Commission on Elections in Manila.

No person who has withdrawn his candidacy for a position shall be eligible as substitute candidate for any other position after the deadline for filing of certificates of candidacy or after January 2, 2004.

SEC.15 ***Effect of Substitution on Votes Cast.*** - In case of valid substitutions after the official ballots have been printed, the votes cast for the substituted candidates shall be considered votes for the substitutes.

SEC. 16. ***Nuisance Candidates.*** - The Commission may, *motu proprio*, or upon verified petition of an interested party, refuse to give due course to or cancel a certificate of candidacy of candidates running for national positions if it is shown that said certificate has been filed to put the election process in the mockery or disrepute, or to cause confusion among the voters by the similarity of names of registered candidates, or by other circumstances or acts which clearly demonstrate that the candidate has no bona fide intention to run for the office for which the certificate of candidacy has been filed and thus prevent a faithful determination of the true will of the electorate.

A verified petition to declare a duly registered candidate as a nuisance candidate shall be filed personally or through duly authorized representative with the Commission by any registered candidate within five (5) days from the last day for filing certificate of candidacy, or not later than January 7, 2004.

SEC. 17. ***Petitions to Deny Due Course to or Cancel of a Certificate of Candidacy.*** - A verified petition seeking to deny due course or to cancel a certificate of candidacy may be filed by any person within five (5) days from the last day for filing of certificate of candidacy but not later than twenty five (25) days from the filing of the certificate of candidacy, exclusively on the ground of material misrepresentation on the contents of the certificate of candidacy as required under Section 74 of the Omnibus Election Code (Batas Pambansa Blg. 881).

SEC. 18. ***Where to file petitions to declare a candidate as nuisance, to deny due course or cancel certificate of candidacy.*** - Petitions to declare a candidate as nuisance, or to deny due course to or cancel certificate of candidacy shall be filed with the following offices of the Commission:

1. Clerk of Court of the Commission - For President, Vice-President or Senator;
2. Regional Election Director - For Member of the House of Representatives and local positions in the National Capital Region; and
3. Provincial Election Supervisor -For Members of the House of Representatives for legislative districts in provinces and local positions outside the National Capital Region.

The procedure on the **"RULES DELEGATING TO COMELEC FIELD OFFICIALS THE HEARING AND RECEPTION OF EVIDENCE OF DISQUALIFICATION CASES FILED IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 10, 2004 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS; MOTU PROPRIO ACTIONS AND DISPOSITIONS OF DISQUALIFICATION CASES"** shall be applicable herein.

SEC.19. ***Effectivity.*** - This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh (7th) day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SEC. 20. ***Dissemination.*** - The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this resolution in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and give the same the widest dissemination possible and furnish copies thereof to all Regional Election Directors and Provincial Election Supervisors and accredited political parties and party-list.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

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FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

Customs exceeds goal

From page A1

The Philippines has run deficits in nine of the past 13 years due to anemic tax collection, evasion, corruption and rising costs to service debts that hit nearly $58 billion in September.

The government hopes to keep the deficit within 4.7 percent of projected gross domestic product this year after last year's 5.2 percent.

In the first 10 months of 2003, the deficit was P163.88 billion, considerably lower than the target of P171.88 billion.

Fiscal crisis?

Banker Jose Isidro Camacho, who resigned as finance secretary last month, said the other day that the economy was in fiscal crisis because of its huge debt burden. But he said it would stay afloat in the run-up to next year's elections.

In Tokyo, Japan, where she was attending a summit with Asean leaders, President Macapagal-Arroyo responded to Camacho's comment cautiously.

In a statement, the President said: "Camacho served well as finance secretary and we shall continue to listen to his views from outside the government. The administration is listening to this debate on good governance and economic stability very closely as we pave the way for firm political and economic security."

In a meeting with reporters in Tokyo Thursday night, the President initially expressed doubts about whether Camacho was properly quoted by media. "I will have to ask Lito if he said this because sometimes people get misquoted."

The President emphasized that Camacho continued to be supportive of her government and that he departed from her administration on good terms.

Purisima to replace Camacho?

In the meeting, the President also dropped hints that SGV & Co. chair Cesar Purisima was her choice as Trade and Industry Secretary to replace Manuel A. Roxas II, who will run for senator next year.

"I will announce my choice when I get back to Manila. He has to inform his partners from the private sector. He is a known business leader and well respected," the President said.

Ms Macapagal said her government was not in "fiscal crisis," noting that the latest budget data showed that the government was below its target budget deficit this year.

"We have achieved fiscal discipline in the short term and we are going to the next step, the long-term reform which is aimed at having a balanced budget by 2009 and lowering the debt to GNP (gross national product) ratio," the President said.

Camacho had also criticized Congress for dragging its feet on important legislative reforms, such as indexing taxes on tobacco and alcoholic drinks to inflation, converting the Bureau of Internal Revenue into a corporate agency, and rationalizing the documentary stamp tax.

BIR target

Customs is mandated to account for about 17 percent of total government revenues this year. The Bureau of Internal Revenue must contribute 72 percent to state coffers, or P424.5 billion.

As of November, the BIR said it had collected P388.584 billion. It needs to collect at least P36 billion this month to meet the target.

Acting Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said the government was likely to end the year with a budget deficit of about P200 billion if not better, against a target of P202 billion. Last year, the deficit reached P210.7 billion against a ceiling of P130 billion.

Amatong said the gap between revenues and expenditures in November was likely below the P17.8-billion target for the month, because of strong collections and disciplined spending.

A government source said the deficit last month stood at about P14 billion, based on preliminary numbers.

The government is expected to bloat the budget deficit this month by P5 billion because of the additional P5,000 cash gift for Christmas to each of the national government's one million employees, a move that was not included in the expenditure program for the year. ***With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. in Tokyo; Reuters***

Some gov't…

From page A1

"It's not luck; it's just one of their cunning attempts to launder ill-gotten wealth," said Ombudsman spokesperson Ernesto Nocos during a seminar aimed at making graft investigators more adept in catching crooks in government.

The seminar on financial investigation was conducted by the American Bar Association-Asia Law Initiative and the US Internal Revenue Service.

A graft investigator who asked not to be named said 45-50 DPWH officials being investigated for graft have claimed to have won sweepstakes draws, lotteries and other raffle draws during their earlier years to justify their wealth.

The investigator said three officials at the Bureau of Customs have told them the same story.

Buy winning tickets

But graft investigators are not impressed.

Nocos said it was not uncommon for corrupt officials to buy winning sweepstakes or lottery tickets from the real winners at a price higher than the amount actually won. This is intended to justify the flow of huge amounts of cash into their bank accounts or their purchase of expensive vehicles or their placement in investments.

"What they are really after is the [winning] check … That check is documentary proof that they received a huge amount of money through honest means," Nocos said.

The official can then use the money for business, buy bigger property, or construct a bigger house.

"That lottery check will serve as his defense against doubts on how he suddenly obtained a huge amount of money," Nocos said.

The modus operandi is not limited to Filipino grafters, it seems.

During the seminar, the speakers from the United States said corrupt American officials sometimes use supposed casino winnings as fronts for their illegally acquired money.

A grafter would pay several people to buy large amounts, say $50,000, of gaming chips in casinos and tell them to play only a small amount. Later that day, they are supposed to give him back the chips which he then surrenders to the casino cashier.

Instead of cash, the grafter would ask the cashier to issue him a check, representing the amount he supposedly won in the casino.

The check is then passed off as a legitimate source of the grafter's increased assets.

The seminar yesterday was part of a series of workshops aimed at improving the expertise of Philippine graft investigators who have been aggressively waging a lifestyle check campaign since the second quarter this year.

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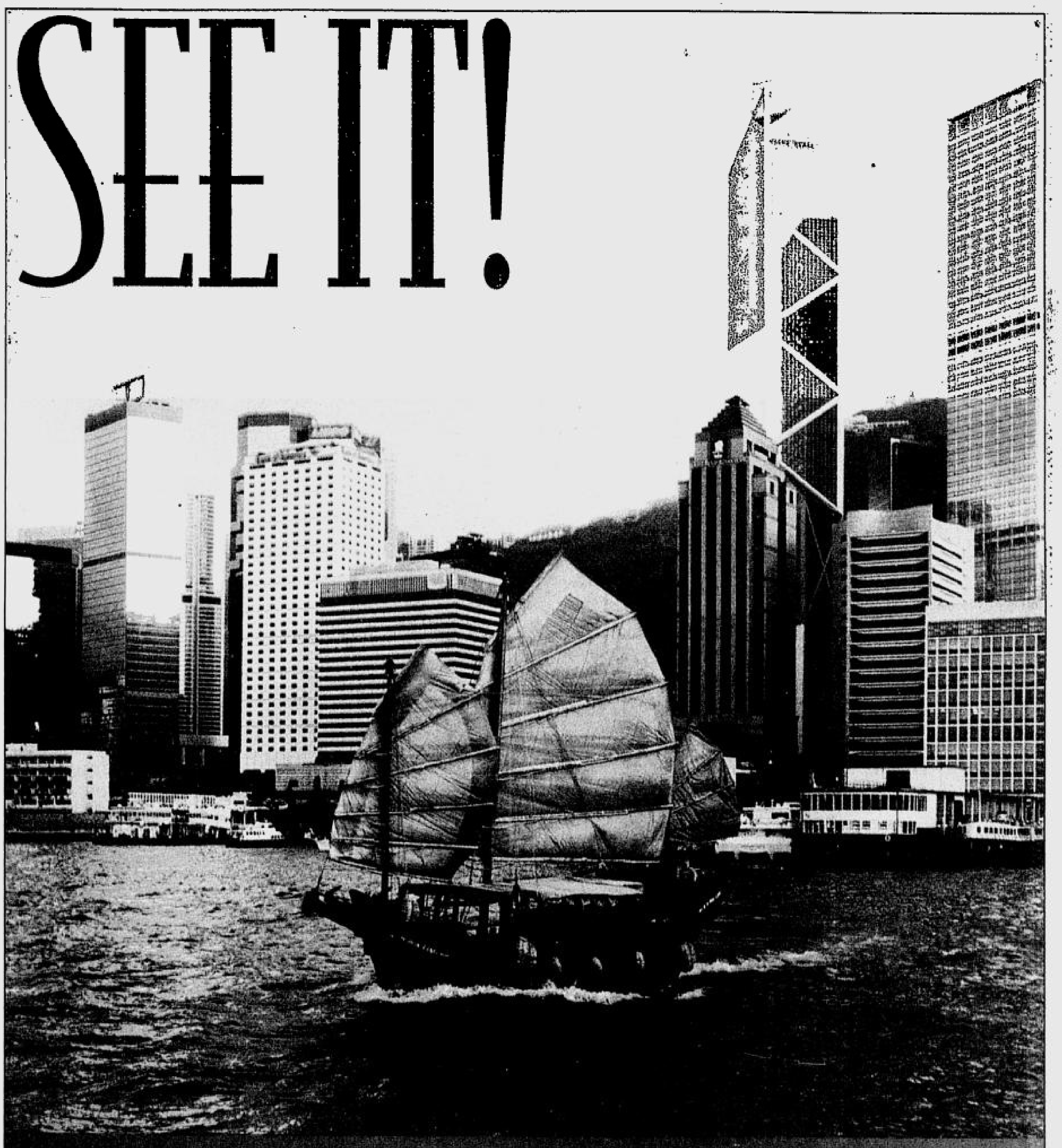

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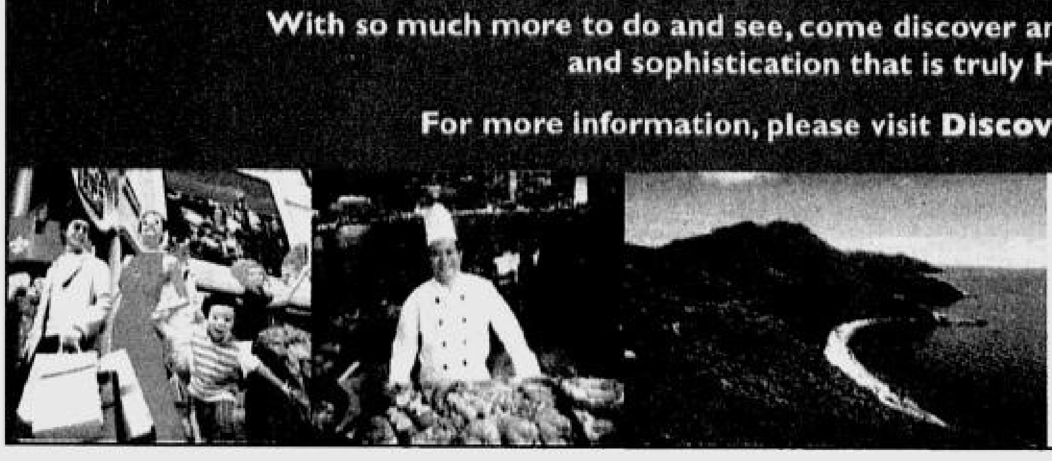

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Blasts rock US compound in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—A series of explosions peppered the US headquarters in the Iraqi capital Friday after a US soldier died in a suicide truck bombing as mass resignations almost halved the first battalion of the new Iraqi army.

Repeated assurances from US top brass sit uneasily with the daily grind of blood and violence in Iraq where three suicide bombers have blown themselves up in as many days nearby American bases.

Four explosions followed by two very loud blasts had rung out in succession about half past midnight in Baghdad followed by another big boom Friday morning.

"Two projectiles impacted in the vicinity of the Green Zone," a military spokesperson said reporting no casualties.

"One caused minor damage to a building," he said. "An investigation is continuing."

Smoke could be seen rising into the clear blue morning sky near the Coalition Provisional Authority headquarters in the city center after the latest explosion.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Blasts rock US compound in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—A series of explosions peppered the US headquarters in the Iraqi capital Friday after a US soldier died in a suicide truck bombing as mass resignations almost halved the first battalion of the new Iraqi army.

Repeated assurances from US top brass sit uneasily with the daily grind of blood and violence in Iraq where three suicide bombers have blown themselves up in as many days nearby American bases.

Four explosions followed by two very loud blasts had rung out in succession about half past midnight in Baghdad followed by another big boom Friday morning.

"Two projectiles impacted in the vicinity of the Green Zone," a military spokesperson said reporting no casualties.

"One caused minor damage to a building," he said. "An investigation is continuing."

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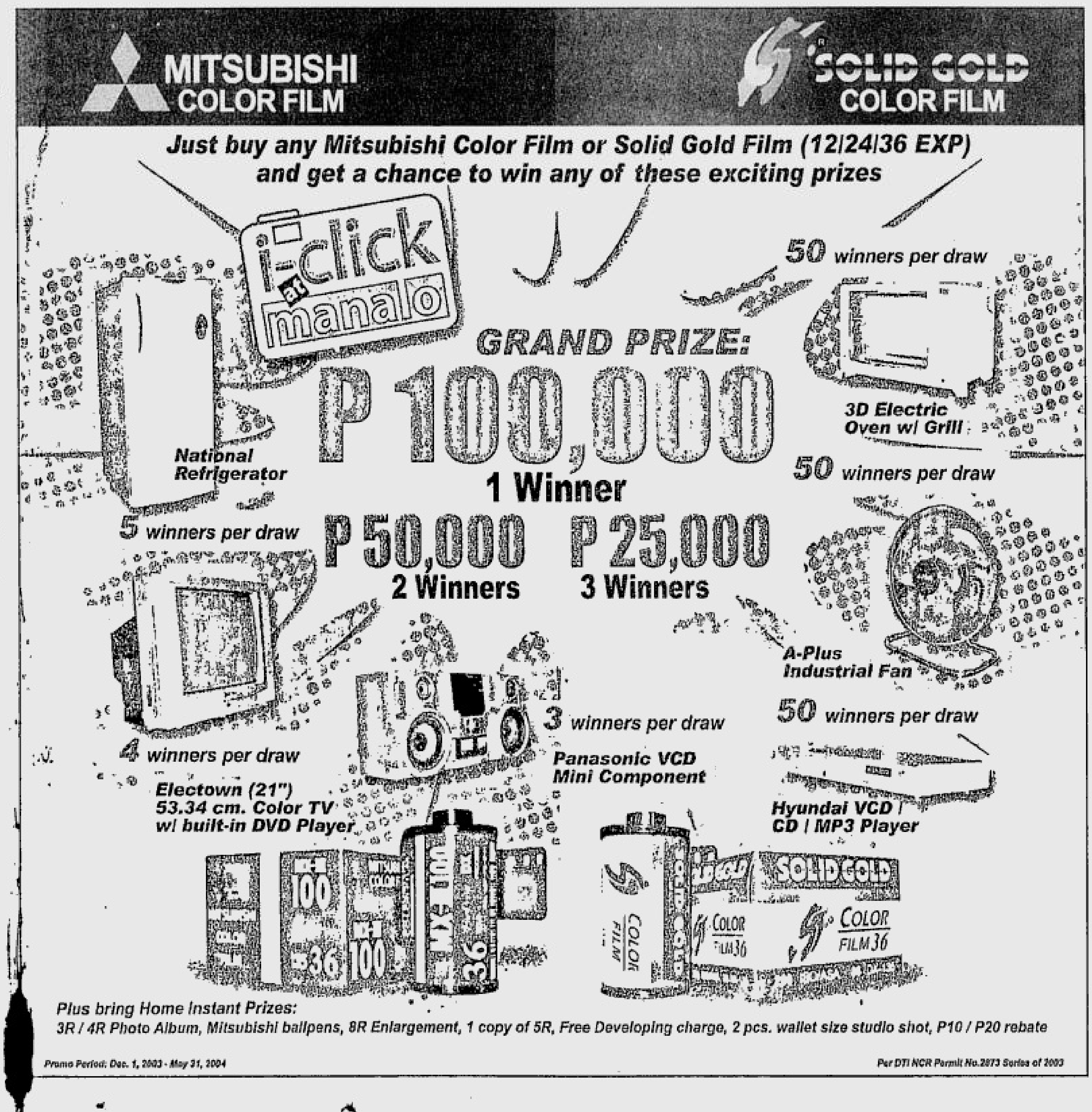

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Call for change

EDITORIAL

SINCE his resignation as finance secretary on Nov. 30, Jose Isidro Camacho has been less inhibited in revealing the severe fiscal crisis that is gripping the country.

Camacho's resignation sent the peso tumbling relative to the US dollar, reflecting the market's anxieties over the government's ability to control the swelling deficit and total debt. Since then, Camacho has generated more shock waves by speaking more than just about the deficit and putting what he calls the "fiscal crisis" in the context of the political system, which is ill-suited to cope with the crisis.

It would be too shallow to consider Camacho's devastating critique as a particularistic attack on the administration whose service he left because of exhaustion. His criticism is an indictment in broad brush strokes of a system in which the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo is embedded and which has hampered efforts to carry out economic reforms.

Although during his watch, Camacho failed to curb the deficit, he can now speak with authority, informed by his frustrations in pushing reforms in the system of taxation. It is because of this fact that Camacho's criticism should be heeded seriously.

Camacho fittingly made his critique before the Philippine Economy Society. In that forum, some of the leading economists of the country joined him in criticizing the political system. Camacho called for an overhaul not just of the fiscal sector but of the entire economy, warning that "time is running out for the Philippines, a country that is lacking in confidence from both the foreign as well as local markets."

His concerns found echoes in the assessment of Gerardo Sicat, professor at the UP School of Economics and head of the National Economic and Development Authority during the Marcos administration, as well as that of Felipe Medalla, also a UP economics professor and former head of Neda during the Estrada administration. The economy, said Sicat, "is drifting with no clear destination in sight." Medalla painted a grim picture of investment in the country, noting that foreign direct investments coming from Japan and China prefer to go to Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia over the Philippines.

From a micro-economic point of view, Camacho said that the country's huge debt, which has reached nearly $58 billion, was "creating a sense of concern." He assured, however, that "we will not go under," explaining further by saying, "We are in a fiscal crisis because we've got this large deficit which compressed our expenditures."

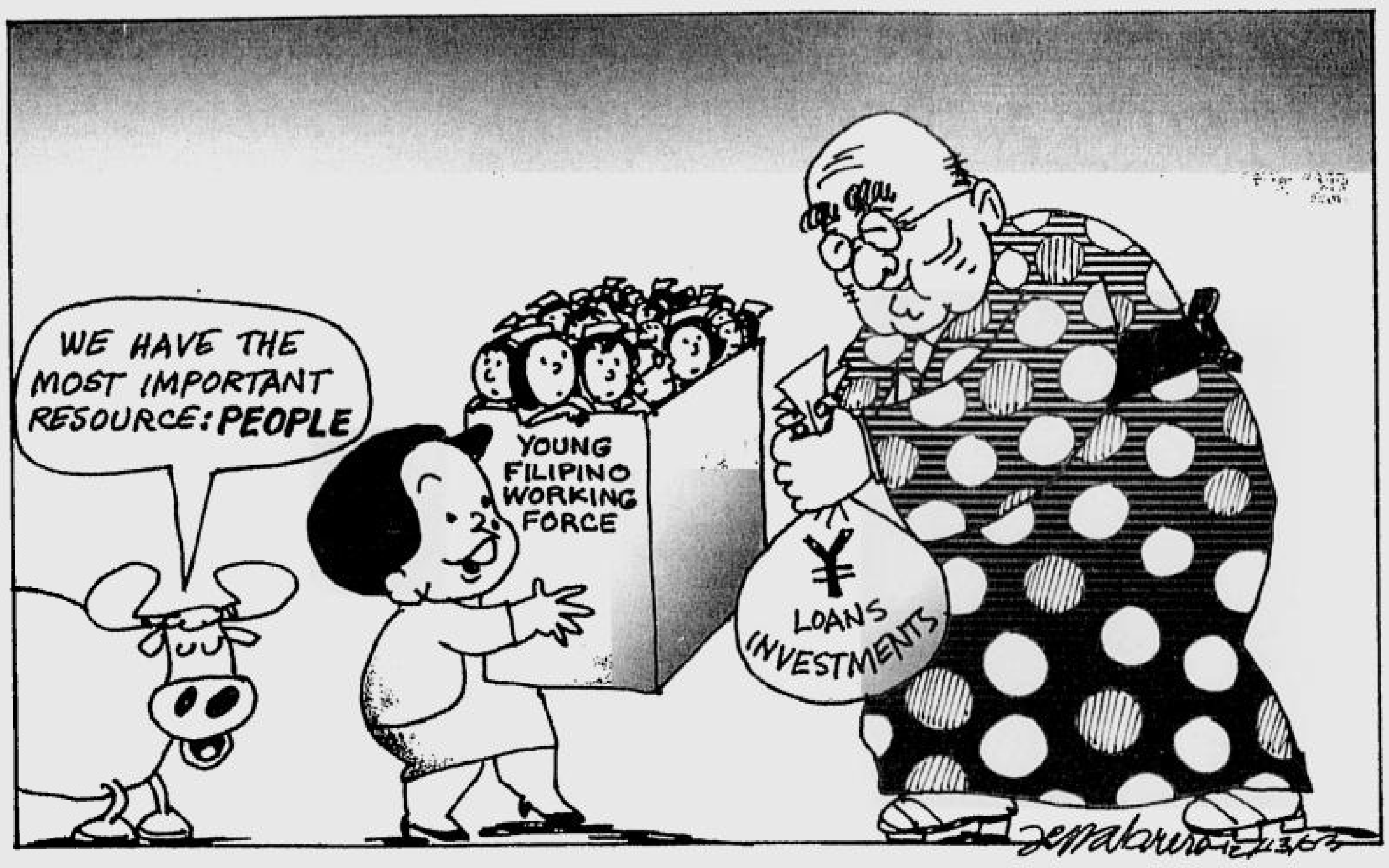
That said, Camacho shifted his criticism toward the political system. "We have to change our political system," he declared. "We need to change our political leaders and bring back credibility, trust and sympathy and people who believe in who are leading us." He took Congress to task for failing to pass key economic bills such as the indexation of beer and tobacco taxes designed to boost revenue collection by P14 billion. "We have a very high debt that is not sustainable unless we do something," he said, "and right now there is something wrong with our political system. It is too slow and is not equipped to deal with this kind of problem."

Camacho said the swelling deficit underlined the need to improve tax collection and for Congress to act on a number of tax reforms. Both Camacho and Medalla criticized the tariff and taxation structure that provides incentives to certain sectors, including the exemption from the 10 percent value-added tax given to lawyers as well as movie actors.

Several tax reform bills have encountered strong resistance in Congress, especially with elections scheduled in 2004. Congressmen are hostile to new and increased taxes which are unpopular. But Medalla reminded the politicians that "the economy must swallow bitter medicine."

It is a sign of his frustrations with the political system that Camacho was prompted to call for change in the political system. He went as far as to say that two extremes offer attractive alternatives to the present gridlock-prone system: a shift to a unicameral parliamentary structure and a highly centralized state vesting the President with strong powers to push reforms.

The business forum provided a stage for refocusing public debate from sterile political discussions centering on presidential alignments for 2004 to more serious economic concerns. The economists' call for radical change in the political system is widely shared in the economic and business sectors.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LOANS INVESTMENTS

Respect the campaign ban

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

IN 1967 Congress passed Republic Act No. 4880 limiting the campaign period to 120 days before the date of the election for candidates elected at large and 90 days for all other candidates. Challenged as violative of freedom of expression, it barely survived a declaration of unconstitutionality for lack of just one justice of the Supreme Court to complete the then needed two-thirds vote.

The rule has since been reiterated in subsequent election laws with only a modification of the length of the original periods. Under RA 7166, the campaign period for the President, Vice President and Senators is 90 days before the date of the election and 45 days for members of the House of Representatives and local elective officials. Campaigning outside these periods is prohibited.

The purpose of the prohibition is to provide for a moratorium on politics except during the allowed campaign periods so the people, especially the public elective officials, can devote their attention to the problems of the country without the distractions of partisan politics and personal ambition. So often in the past was this objective mocked, particularly by defeated candidates, some of whom mounted their campaigns for the next election so soon after their rejection in the polls just concluded.

This objective has been largely ignored, however, through obvious subterfuges that technically could be excused under the strict interpretation of the prohibition. These evasions are widely apparent even now although the next elections have yet to be held next year. Many prospective candidates have already started their respective campaigns in mockery of the law they are supposed to obey and, in the case of executive officials, enforce.

Chief among these violators is no less than the President of the Philippines who is constitutionally obligated to "ensure that the laws be faithfully executed."

As of two weeks ago, President Macapagal-Arroyo was reported to have so far made 127 provincial trips since she changed her mind and reneged on her promise not to run in the 2004 presidential election. The sorties were supposedly made on official business and therefore at public expense. She was accompanied by some of her *alalay*, and members of the media as well, who all also traveled on taxpayers' money.

You may be sure that during these official visits, her staff dutifully reminded the people that GMA was in the running again and no longer *hors de combat* as before.

If there is any doubt about her intentions, there are those wearisome radio and television spots proclaiming her virtues. She claims she has improved water transportation from Luzon to Mindanao for the comfort of the passengers and more convenience in the shipping of cargo, especially foodstuffs. In her televised distribution of land certificates to illegal occupants of public property, she grandly said they were "no longer squatters" by virtue of her generosity. In another commercial, a soldier's family is ecstatic over its acquisition of a house through her benign concern, and the father and his son gratefully salute their commander in chief.

To be fair, though, let it not be said that President Macapagal is the only one violating the campaign prohibition. In fact, all the other presidential candidates are following the leader and also prematurely and illegally campaigning. Raul Roco has been traveling all over the country railing at the administration; his colorful shirts are themselves campaign speeches. Panfilo Lacson started his drive with his privileged speech against Jose Pidal and has defied his Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino president Edgardo Angara for supporting Fernando Poe Jr. Ang Panday fired his first cannon at the Manila Hotel and adopted the silly slogan "Together, Each Achieves More," which made my 8-year-old granddaughter Cara laugh. Even Loren Legarda, she of the medicine commercial, is aspiring to be the running mate of whoever will accept her.

Taking their cue from their elders, the local officials are also trying to enhance their own image. The mayors of Metro Manila have adorned their respective cities with their mammoth portraits, lighted at night, of course, also at public expense. Streamers are mushrooming now from prospective office-seekers carrying the innocent message of Yuletide cheer that translates to "vote for me." Curiously, Mayor Joey Marquez's campaign gimmick, for whatever position he is running, probably as Director General of Trash, is uncollected garbage in Parañaque City.

Violators are hereby warned that the campaign period begins only on Feb. 11, 2004, for the President, Vice President and Senators and on March 27, 2004, for members of the House of Representatives and local officials. Until then, premature candidates, hold your horses and respect the law.

How's our English?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE PHILIPPINES is the third-largest English-speaking country in the world, after the United States and the United Kingdom. That's what it says in practically all the blurbs about our country. One even goes so far as to say that about 72 percent of our country's population is "fluent" in English.

"Fluent." I looked the word up in the dictionary, just to make sure that it means what I thought it means. It is defined as "indicating facility in or command of something"; "able to speak or write smoothly, easily or readily." And from the evidence of my own eyes and ears, it is doubtful if 56 million of our compatriots, as claimed, meet that criterion.

A recent e-mail from businessman-golfer Joey Yujuico, with a list of some examples of how the language gets fractured, is illustrative: "I couldn't care a damn." "What's your next class before this?" "Don't touch me not!" "Hello? For a while, please hang yourself." "It's spilled milk under the bridge." "You! You're not a boy anymore! You're a man anymore!"

Even in the largest multinational companies, the operator, after the first, very smooth "So-and-so corporation, Good Morning!" will switch to Filipino when the caller says anything other than the expected request to be connected to some office. Radio and TV stations are barraged with protesting calls and texts when commentators and talk-show hosts speak in English. So I don't know where those 56 million people are.

And neither, it seems, do call-center firms who want to hire people fluent in spoken English in the Metro Manila area. Bambina Buenaventura informs me that out of every 100 applicants for call-center operators in the National Capital Region—and there are thousands of them; because entry-level pay is P15,000 a month, plus overtime for evening and weekend work—only five pass the oral test. The applicants do fine as far as the aptitude part is concerned, but spoken English is another matter altogether. Regional accents are not the problem, says Bambina, because these are relatively easy to correct. The problem is that 95 percent of the applicants have difficulty both in understanding what is asked, and in communicating the answer if they understood the question.

Surprisingly (because we in the NCR think we are the best in everything), call-centers find Cebu and Dumaguete relatively more fertile hunting grounds for English-fluent operators. That is why they are beginning to locate in those areas, rather than in the NCR. The main point, however, is that in the "third largest English-speaking country," there is a shortage of English-fluent speakers. Which means that in a globalizing world, we are losing an important competitive edge. Job opportunities are being lost. It is not a demand problem but a supply one.

And if you think that the call-center situation is an exception, think again. Bambina tosses out another bombshell: Filipino nurses who want to work in the United States (which apparently needs 400,000 more nurses) have no difficulty hurdling the nursing exams. They have the requisite technical skills, and of course their patient skills are almost legendary. Where they fail—again—is in language proficiency. Only 16 percent pass the so-called TSE, the Test of Spoken English.

Of course, the nurses' loss is the country's gain. But that is beside the point. The point is that, as a country, we are losing our proficiency in English, and the opportunities that go with familiarity with the global lingua franca. We may be the third-largest English-speaking country in the world, but, as Cesar Buenaventura, Bambina's husband, says, we are on the way down while the countries are going up as far as English is concerned.

It is not difficult to enumerate the possible factors behind the "de-Englishing" of the Philippines: First was a misplaced nationalism that concluded that speaking English was a negative for us, because it was reflective of a colonial mentality (if it gives us any comfort, Indonesia and Malaysia felt the same way). Then there were the series of decisions by broadcast media to use Filipino as their medium of communication, up to the point where canned English TV programs from abroad have been dubbed in the vernacular (where a little bit of foresight—using Filipino subtitles, or even using English subtitles for the dubbed-in-Filipino programs—would have helped keep or even improve our English advantage).

Mix that with the continuing decline in the quality of our educational system, for reasons we will not discuss at this time. Add the fact that our overseas workers are more proficient in English than the colleagues they have left behind. Then factor in the foreign (US) demand for our teachers, which has resulted in skimming off most of the cream of our teachers, as they fall for the lure of salaries at least 10 times what they earn here. There you have it.

But the good news is that at last the Philippine government has recognized the problem, with President Macapagal-Arroyo "directing the Department of Education to return English as primary medium of instruction." Better late than never. (Malaysia did its aboutface earlier. Thailand, China and even Myanmar are actively pursuing English proficiency in their education systems.) Even better news is that the private sector—the American Chamber of Commerce, the RP-US Business Council, people like Bambina—is taking a hand.

Already, I feel better.

Pinoys network globally

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A SIGNIFICANT convention opens Monday, Dec. 15, at the PICC on Roxas Boulevard and continues until Thursday, Dec. 18. Called the "Second Global Filipino Networking Convention," the event will put Filipinos overseas, hailed as the "new heroes" of the country, on center stage. The overseas Pinoys have been a potent force for the uplift of the economy and its survival in the darkest times, remitting an estimated $8 billion to $10 billion annually. Felipe Miranda, Pulse Asia chief, in a recent briefing for INQUIRER staffers, pointed out that the overseas program accounts for 5 percent of the nation's gross national product, something no existing company here has matched.

This gathering comes as the nation is caught up with the election fever, and the question that inevitably comes to mind is whether there is an "overseas Filipino vote." Miranda said there definitely is, just as there is a youth vote, a labor vote and to a certain degree a women's vote, and all these can be used by candidates for projection.

* * *

As the conference's name implies, the "fun-filled, power-packed" Second Global Filipino Networking Convention is expected to enable Filipinos from all over the globe to network with one another, sharing knowledge, technology, experiences, resources and contacts, according to Presidential Adviser on Overseas Filipino Communities Heherson Alvarez who is also conference honorary chair. Alvarez said the OFW phenomenon presents "the challenge of creating a new self-image of the 'Global Filipino' who is a positive factor in the development of many nations and in the growth of the Philippines." Perhaps this phenomenon could do more for his country if he can network with other overseas Pinoys. Thus, the theme of this convention is "A Homecoming: A Renewal, the Blossoming of Opportunities."

* * *

Some 4,000 Filipinos overseas from the business, health and medicine, tourism, sports and entertainment sectors are expected to attend this second networking conference (the first was held in San Francisco, California last year). Timed for the loveliest season of the "Pinoy Christmas," it will enable overseas Pinoys not only to reunite with their families and friends but also to organize themselves into provincial chapters that could help in the development of their provinces. It will also give them the opportunity to catch up on issues and developments here, especially those affecting them directly, such as the Overseas Absentee Voting Act and the Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act. The program includes a keynote address from the President and the swearing in of the "New" Filipino Citizens under the Dual Citizenship Law. GMA is expected to hammer on the "need to foster greater unity among Pinoys worldwide, amid a world divided by social, economic and political problems."

* * *

To ensure its success and in recognition of the "important contributions that could be expected from overseas Filipinos if properly linked and empowered," as GMA put it, she issued Executive Order 208 creating a public-private sector task force for the confab, chaired by Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon and co-chaired by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, with Foreign Secretary Blas Ople and Interior Secretary Jose Lina as members. Representing the private sector are former Tourism Secretary Mina Gabor, Alex Esclamado, Rodel Rodis, Marivic Bamba and Enrique Agana.

As I see it, the focus of this big gathering has moved from the huge annual remittance of overseas Filipinos to how they can help their country and their hometowns, in terms of technical skills and expertise acquired or honed abroad as well as projects that help uplift the lives of their provincemates, such as scholarships for poor youths. The overseas Chinese, especially our own Chinoys, are the best examples of this caring for the homeland, helping obscure hometowns in China with development programs. Filipinos overseas cannot do less.

* * *

This week, the charming ambassador of India, Navrekha Sharma, invited me and three other media colleagues to the new branch of Prince of Jaipur at the Global City in Fort Bonifacio, Makati. With its rich décor of beautiful silk fabrics, lamps and art objects, the restaurant gives that ambiance of a sheik's palace. Lunch was a culinary experience, featuring delicious northern Indian cuisine with grilled lamb, beef, chicken and prawns and all the breads and sauces. Ambassador Sharma promised a culinary tour of the Indian south next time.

The Star's Chit Pedrosa, the most avid media advocate of the parliamentary form of government, queried our host about India's own experience. She replied that India presents the best model for study here, instead of the more developed Western societies, since economic and political conditions are not that different in her country from those obtaining here. This is a good suggestion for Speaker Jose de Venecia and the pro-charter change legislators to consider.

I recalled to the Indian envoy how her own country was once so enamored of movie stars and other media celebrities, and she said with a smile that it's still true even now. But the good thing is that with the parliamentary system, celebrities serve in local positions and cannot aspire for high national offices.

The ambassador also pointed out that India is unchallenged in the computer software field, but is now also venturing into hardware manufacture. She added that its $2-billion pharmaceutical industry began as a "copycat" industry vis-à-vis Western pharmaceutical firms, but after two decades it is venturing into research and development in answer to the need for cheaper medicines of its one billion people.

Music ushers in Christmas

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BAGUIO—Perhaps it's fate conspiring to usher in the Christmas season for me through music.

Even while my husband and I were still in Pangasinan on our way to this city, I got a call from Edna Anton asking if we wanted to watch a "Christmas Concert" that evening. Held at the CAP-John Hay Trade and Cultural Center, the concert had been organized for the second year in a row, with organizers hoping this will be the start of an annual tradition in the city.

The concert combines the talents of three of Baguio's top choirs: the United Church of Christ in the Philippines' "HIS" Music Ministry, the St. Louis University Glee Club and the Baguio Colleges Foundation Choral Society.

Under the direction of Sudhakar John Doraiswamy, the Baguio Chorale retold the Christmas story through song, including a little-known hymn "Mary Did You Know?" The song speculates on how much the Blessed Mother knew when she gave the Angel of the Annunciation her yes to God's challenge to bear the Savior. Did she know she would lose Him so early in life, and that He would suffer so? Did she know that she would bear a son who would in fact save her and humanity?

Indeed, the real beginning of the Christmas tale is not the birth of the Christ Child in the manger, or the worship of angels and shepherds. It really begins in that small room in Nazareth, when a young maiden consented to be the mother of the Son of God and thereby set humanity on the road to salvation.

The second part of the concert featured beloved Filipino carols, from the traditional such as "Pasko na Naman" and "Himig ng Pasko" to pop classics like Ryan Cayabyab's "Kumukutikutitap" and the very romantic "Anong Gagawin Mo sa Pasko."

* * *

TWO Baguio-based singers, soprano Cherry Moredo Pangilinan and tenor John Glenn Gaerlan filled the hall with traditional carols during the intermission. Their numbers reminded the audience of the origins of these popular hymns, of their religious roots and solemn intent.

Clearly, the audience knew the singers (the soloists and the chorale members both) and welcomed them cheerfully, reacting with warmth and homegrown appreciation.

I can only hope that indeed the Christmas Chorale becomes an annual tradition for Baguio, which, despite its growing population and emergence as a bustling metropolis in the mountains, remains, out of the tourist season, a small town where people still know each other.

Though there are colorful decorations on the lampposts and rotundas around the city, Christmas in Baguio feels more subdued and less commercial than in the metropolis. Perhaps the chilly air puts people in the mood for intimacy, for cocooning (and canoodling?) indoors, in the company of loved ones. Whatever the reason, Baguio at this time of year provides a peaceful respite from the stresses of the season, breathing space before being swallowed up once more in the city's frenzy of holiday-making.

* * *

BUT harsh reality intrudes even in this quiet city. We woke up Friday morning and were startled to read in the papers that eight people, including six female dancers, were killed in a fire that broke out in a nightclub along Magsaysay Avenue Thursday morning.

Heartbreaking indeed were stories that the women, who had called it a day at four that morning, were "so happy" the night before, looking forward to finishing a lucrative contract, with one dancer happily making plans to send money home to her mother.

The Perutz Nightclub, where the eight died, reports said, was located in the basement of a commercial building, and other workers who tried to rescue the dancers said they couldn't find their way through the club's narrow hallways and dark passages. The fire exit was also said to have been blocked by a refrigerator.

This then is the downside of the development of Baguio, again pointing to the need for better planning and zoning, for greater vigilance on the part of local authorities and for stricter application of the building code. Beautiful and peaceful as it is, Baguio is still a fragile environment, and it will take everyone's cooperation to make sure it remains a safe and secure city for everyone, visitor and resident alike.

* * *

HERE'S good news to make us Pinoys proud:

The Vatican has just announced the appointment of Rev. Fr. Oscar A. Solis as auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, the first Filipino-American bishop to be named to a diocese in the United States.

While I have yet to get more details about the soon-to-be Bishop Solis, his appointment as auxiliary bishop in the large archdiocese of Los Angeles can be seen as recognition of the role of Filipino-Americans in the flourishing of the Catholic Church in that part of the United States. All over the West Coast, and in other areas that have seen a large influx of Filipino migrants, Church authorities have been appointing Filipino priests to head parishes with large Fil-Am communities. As I witnessed in the St. Augustine Parish in Daly City in the San Francisco Bay area, which has an all-Filipino priestly contingent, these parishes turn out to be very dynamic, pulling both its migrant and resident parishioners into a vibrant parish life.

Congratulations to Bishop Solis, and may he be an effective bridge between the cultures of his homeland and the land he now calls home.

***

FROM WRITER Pete Lacaba comes a reminder to watch the Tagalog-dubbed version of the movie "Frida" on CinemaOne (Sky 22, Home 19) at 11 p.m. on Dec. 21. Lacaba made the translation.

Since I (sadly) missed "Frida" on its original theatrical release, I'll surely make time for this! Thanks for the reminder, Pete.

Things useful to know

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

SOMETIMES when you think it's all a waste of time, someone writes to inform you that yes, they're listening and here are a couple of things you and others may want to know.

Next time you need an itinerary of sorts for your *balikbayan* relatives or friends, Eric Dedace of Sariaya, Quezon, has some suggestions. No matter how "pathetic" Manila may be in comparison to our Southeast Asian neighbors, he believes "there are fairly quite a number of heritage repositories in existence in the Southern Tagalog area… shrines, historical landmarks, private and government-ran museums scattered around." My only complaint is that there is no critical assessment as to whether all or only some of these are worth seeing. These include the Mabini Shrine, the Miguel Malvar Historical Landmark, the Leon Apacible Historical Landmark, the Marcela Agoncillo Historical Landmark in Batangas; the Bonifacio Trial House (Maragondon), the Emilio Aguinaldo Historical Shrine in Cavite; the Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery in Nagcarlan, Laguna, and the Hermano Pule Shrine and the Casa Segunda (I'm not sure where these last two are located).

Among the museums he mentions are: Villa Escudero "which is also a heritage resort like no other in the whole Philippines" (Tiaong, Quezon) and the De la Salle Museum in Dasmariñas, Cavite, "a very beautiful lifestyle museum that is… dedicated to the preservation of certain aspects and material culture of the 19th century Philippine ilustrado lifestyle." There is, as well, the Msgr. Yatco Ecclesiastical Museum (site not given) "which houses chiefly religious artifacts while the Sariaya Museum is a small repository of a community's socio-cultural, historical and religious heritage in the oldest house in town. Government-run museums in Quezon include the Casa de Comunidad in Tayabas, restored by the NHI and housing a library and an exhibition area on the 2nd floor; the Museo ng Batangas, the Museo ng Lipa and the Pila Museum in Laguna housed in a renovated portion of an old school building with artifacts like Sung ceramics excavated from an earlier town site called Pinagbayanan. Unknown to most of us, there's still the Lucena City Museum and the Gintong Yaman ng Quezon housed in the 1924 Lucena hospital building containing Manuel Quezon memorabilia and photographs and a new Museo ng Mauban that includes 18th century cannons."

Quezon Province, as some of you are already aware, has some lovely architectural sites. "Two of them, the Don Catalino Rodriguez house and that of his brother, Dr. Isidro Rodriguez, are open to the public, portions of which have been refurbished into the 'Noon at Ngayon ng Sariaya' restaurant as well as the Casa Esperanza, a lovely venue for social events."

Certainly Dedace has collected data that are invaluable for all who are interested in things Filipino. Outside of heritage concerns, there are still the UPLB Museum of Natural History, the Museum of the Wild Life Collections of Dr. Dioscoro Raboro, the Entology Museum at the Institute of Biological Sciences Building, UPLB and the Rice World Museum of the International Rice Research Institute. One of a kind is the Carfel Vistamar Marine Museum owned by Carlos and Fely Leobrera with their collection of shells in Anilao, Batangas."

The crux of the matter is as usual government. Dedace states that maintaining a museum is, of course, costly but it's time local governments recognize "the rediscovery of self-identity instills pride and respect for time-honored traditions, history and their representative symbols… old edifices, shrines, monuments, churches, and parks" and support the efforts of museum workers and others in their area who are involved in this thankless task.

* * *

Now departing from things cultural, here's an e-mail from a friend to take your mind off certain nasty subjects none of us can do anything about (at the moment anyway).

20 THINGS YOU SHOULD HAVE LEARNED BY MIDDLE AGE

1. If you're too open-minded, your brains will fall out.
2. Don't worry about what people think; they don't do it very often.
3. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in the garage makes you a car.
4. Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.
5. My idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance.
6. Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious.
7. For every action, there is an equal and opposite government program.
8. If you look like your passport picture, you definitely need the trip.
9. A conscience is what hurts when all of your other parts feel so good.
10. Eat well, stay fit, die anyway.
11. Men are from earth. Women are from earth. Deal with it.
12. No man has ever been shot while doing the dishes.
13. A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.
14. Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.
15. Opportunities always look bigger going than coming.
16. Junk is something you've kept for years and throw away three weeks before you need it.
17. There is always one more imbecile than you counted on.
18. Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.
19. Thou shalt not weigh more than thy refrigerator.
20. If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.

Darkroom

YOUNG BLOOD

Froilan Vincent D. Bersamina

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

A BATCH MATE of mine once asked a question I could hardly answer: "What if the darkroom talks?" She seemed to be truly baffled, although there was a naughty twinkle in her eyes.

Indeed the question was full of irony, for how can a room speak when it is lifeless? But then I found myself turning it over in my head and even made a follow-up question: "Then, what would it say?"

Apparently, Ana, my co-writer in the Dawn, a weekly student publication of the University of the East, was referring to the room next to the editor's cubicle. Actually, it's no longer a darkroom now after our alumni editors decided to turn it into a stockroom. Now you see no films or old developing machine inside, only a sink with black tiles, a hanging cabinet and a refrigerator.

In the past, the darkroom played a very vital role. Without it, there could be no photographs on the front page and succeeding pages. But as time passed by, advanced technology turned the darkroom into a part of Dawn history.

The time I first entered the office, the room was painted black. Its dark texture was the thing we will always miss. Its darkness was like an opiate that could relieve pressures and lighten troubles.

I can still remember the time when my batch mates and I would gather in the darkroom and chat about the day's experiences as we went about our tasks. Our conversations usually included complaints about arrogant sources and reprimands we got from our seniors. We came to know the word "*kuryente*" very well as some of our sources plugged inaccurate stories for publication.

When we were still "probis" (probationary staffers), we started to hear gossip about some alumni who held the office in the past. The stories varied from happy to outrageous. Some of our seniors told stories that sounded like urban legends. Most stories were interesting, such as disputes between seniors, love affairs, ghosts and even coups. The coups did not succeed due to lack of support from the "probis" and other low-ranking staffers.

It's almost the same as the present when several attempts to grab power have been made. Every time, the coup plotters held many innocent people hostage.

The Dawn has a tradition of respect for the hierarchy and seniority. Our tradition carries some resemblance to that of the Philippine Military Academy. The plebeians there correspond to our "probis," whose only right is to bow to the tradition and to their seniors and nothing more because that would mean a violation of the tradition.

Our batch was originally composed of 14 "probis," until the system left only two of us: Ana and I. Survival of the fittest is the name of the game.

Archie, my idealistic friend who quit, once said, "If you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen. There are many ways of serving the people."

The system succeeded in decimating our batch, leaving only the strongest links. But our friendship remains. Sometimes I think our tradition is harsh and discriminatory, but then I realize that without it, there would be no Dawn and no respect for seniors.

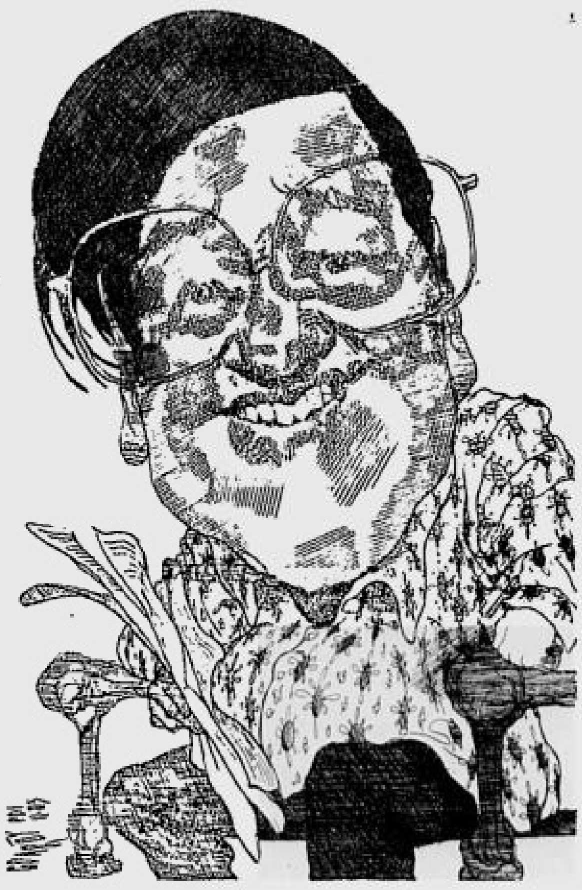
I can't help but equate these things to what is happening outside the campus. Crimes and wrongdoings are rampant, ruining innocent lives and all the government can say is that it will "protect democracy."

As time passed, I found myself no longer at the bottom of the hierarchy. At the top, I could see how things happened. Then I saw the darkroom with new occupants, a new batch of "probis" with a new hope for the Dawn. And then the question comes back to me: If the darkroom could tell stories, what would it say? What tales would it share?

Things have changed. The darkroom is not black as its walls have been covered with wallpaper with vibrant colors. To me it's still the same darkroom where friendships started and no matter what color it wears, for as long as it is there, many dreams and aspirations will still be developed in the future.

Froilan Vincent D. Bersamina, 20, is an AB Communication Arts student of the University of the East and a staff member of the Dawn.

IN THE NEWS



Raul Roco

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Changes must be made in the Constitution

THIS is a reaction to Carmelo S. Dorotheo's letter, "We're simply not ready for change." (PDI, 11/20/03)

For his information, in the ongoing workshops on charter change, one amendment to judicial power mostly sought is to delete a passage under Section 1, Article VIII of the Constitution.

It reads: "And to determine whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the Government."

There's no doubt that when former Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion authored that provision, he had nothing but the best of intentions. Unfortunately, there are members of the judiciary and lawyers alike who see the provision as an opportunity to pursue nefarious ends.

If a scorecard were kept, it would show that the provision is resorted to more often for nefarious ends than the spirit it was nobly intended. The provision has become an access to even honest judges to encroach into economic and business questions they're not competent of addressing.

Economic losses due to delays of implementing contracts and their ripple effects have stunted our economic development. Cost increases, lay-offs and jobs that could've been created but were lost due to temporary restraining orders (TROs) based on the provision are samples of its stultifying effects.

The country's economic growth without that provision surely would have been higher than heretofore has been possible.

It's often said Filipinos are masochistic and have a propensity of putting up barriers against things that may or may not happen without realizing the barriers could cause worse adversities than those to be prevented.

There are several other constitutional flaws similar to that provision in terms of economic losses the nation continues to suffer. That's why charter change has become imperative if we were to halt the country's slide into the political and economic quagmire that some Latin American nations have fallen into. Recent examples are Venezuela (the world's fifth oil exporting country) and Bolivia, which our leaders surely don't want the Philippines to follow.

As to Dorotheo's question about what's wrong with the presidential form of government, citing the United States where it's doing very well, let's take it from Lee Kuan Yew. Lee told local businessmen in 1992, "Do not compare the Philippines with the United States. The latter has limitless expanse of territory, a vast wealth and natural resources, and an incomparable industrial power."

—**FRANK WENCESLAO,**
92 Mindanao Ave.,
Quezon City

A proper parliamentary system for us

THIS has reference to the column of Solita Monsod titled "Parliamentary could be the killer." (PDI, 11/8/03) Monsod's comments are a classic example of an intellectual commenting on an issue not sufficiently thought-out or, worse, encumbered with bias or prejudice.

Monsod opines that the current Davide impeachment case "would banish forever any lingering illusion that a parliamentary system is the answer to the problems of our country," referring to a combination of the presidential and parliamentary system along the French line.

In the first place, except for some legislators, nobody seriously advocates the French parliamentary model, which is the worst model that should be adopted by the country. We say this because the French model splits executive power between the prime minister and the president, a system that will surely bring salience to the fractious nature of our democratic ethic.

What we advocate is a parliamentary system that has a legislature (which may be likened to a board of directors in a corporation), which elects the prime minister who will be subject always to the active and effective control of the people, through a people's assembly and/or through legitimate and accredited people's and non-government organizations representing the people at large.

The people under the system we advocate shall have the power to dissolve the parliament the moment it becomes apparent—and not later—that it no longer serves their best interests. However, such power has to be screened by a nonpartisan head of state, elected by the people at large from a pre-selected list of elder statesmen with the appropriate experience and qualifications and with unquestionable integrity. It is a system that incorporates the best features of the English, Indian, Pakistani, German and other models, with adaptations based on our own national culture and idiosyncrasies.

Perhaps, what the current impeachment imbroglio should indicate to us is that the remaking of our political system should not be entrusted to the politicians in Congress, but to duly elected and non-partisan representatives of the people. This could be done if Congress would enact a law providing for the election of such delegates to be convened in a constitutional convention soon after the May 2004 elections, who will come up with a new constitution within a period of no longer than one year. The new system of government should be installed within one year from the ratification of the new constitution.

Secondly, who said that "a parliamentary system is the answer to the problems of the country"? The parliamentary system is the key to the solution of the problems of our country. It is still we, the concerned citizens of the country, who will solve our national problems with the aid of, or through, the appropriate parliamentary system.

—**ELISEO P. OCAMPO,**
executive chair,
SulongBayan,
ocampo@mydestiny.net

Smart strives to be a good corporate citizen

ON BEHALF of Smart Communications, I would like to share with your readers that soon after we received a copy of John Silva's e-mail which was featured in the Dec. 12 column of Rina Jimenez-David, our company immediately took the initiative to review and evaluate its advertising strategies, taking to heart Silva's inputs.

Smart appreciates feedback from all sectors and immediately processes these inputs with the end in view of becoming a better company. In our correspondence with Silva, we advised him and invited him to share more of his ideas with us toward coming out with "creative branding techniques" that would allow us to strike a balance between our advertising objectives and maintaining the inherent beauty of each locality.

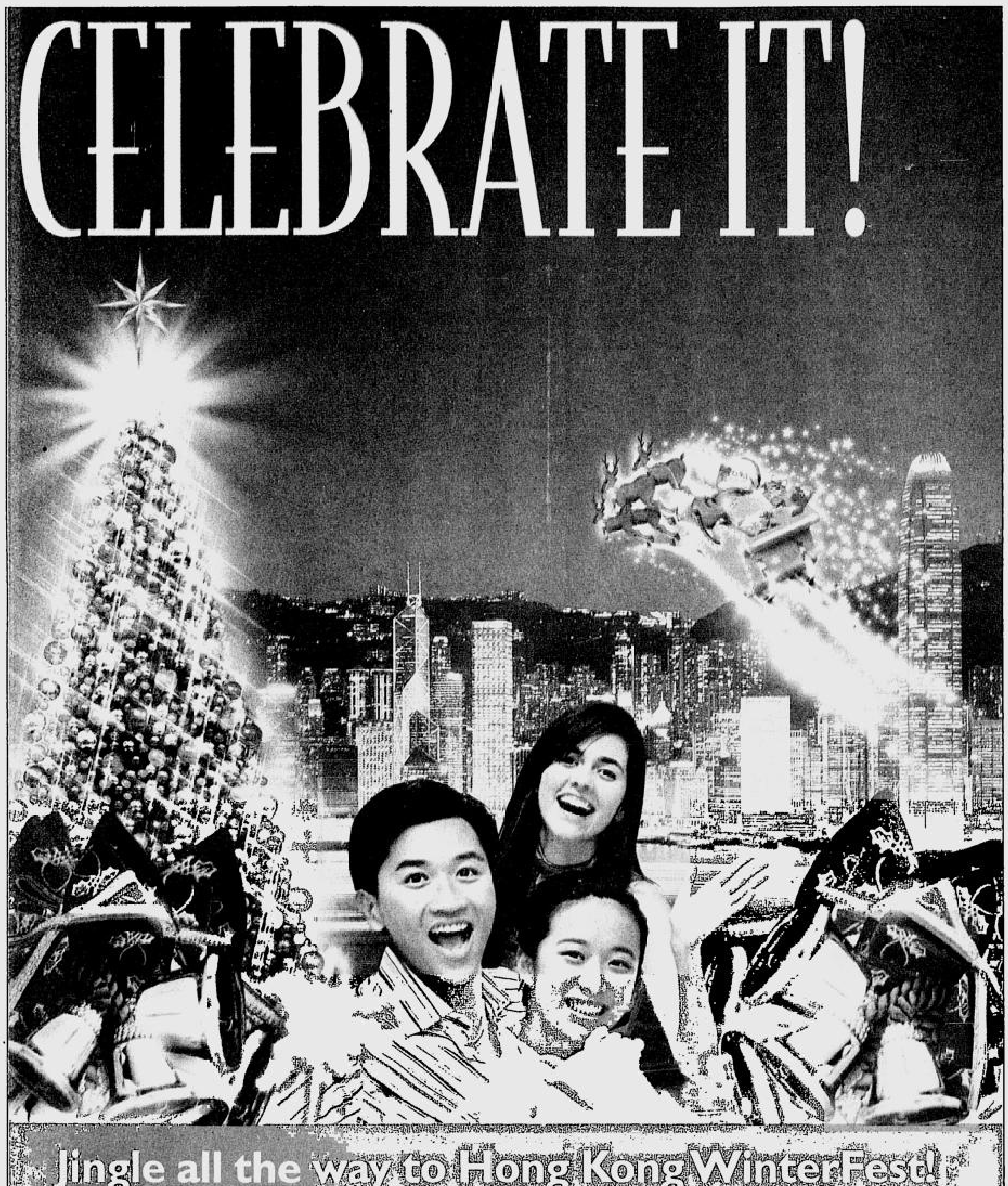
We likewise assured him that our marketing drive of putting streamers and banners on the roads leading to Baguio was only done in the context of that one specific event, the Ad Congress.

The Ad Congress is an event that primarily honors the marketing and advertising initiatives of the industry. Thus, it is the one event where advertisers such as Smart can highlight its marketing and advertising efforts to the industry as a whole. There was no intention to "brand" the roads in the name of commercialism. Our target market were the members of the advertising industry and again, only in the context of the Ad Congress.

It is important to note that local governments, fiestas and events have started to see the value of partnerships and sponsorships with companies like ours. Therefore, we envision having more participation and visibility in local events and celebrations, such as our ongoing partnership with Camp John Hay, as David mentioned in her column. Smart's marketing and advertising campaigns are mutually agreed upon by the host city or event producer and our company. Smart does not indiscriminately put up merchandising collaterals and advertising materials without the approval, agreement and consent of the proper authorities. Therefore, from the business perspective there does exist a binding contractual agreement between Smart and the event producers that gives us the authority to engage in such advertising and marketing initiatives. Nonetheless, we will continue our drive to be responsible merchandisers and further raise our benchmark of living up to the highest ideals of advertising ethics.

Rest assured that Smart remains committed to meeting its corporate objectives to enhance its leadership position in the wireless industry, while at the same time continuing to be good corporate citizens of the country.

—**BUTCH JIMENEZ,**
vice president for media
and corporate communications,
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.,
P.O. Box 2148 Makati City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Maguindanao town launches 'corny' bid for spot in tourism

UPI, Maguindanao—If you can eat a hundred broiled or boiled corns, then you should try joining this upland agricultural town's corn festival.

"Eat all the corn you can and win a prize," Mayor Ramon Piang said as he posed the challenge to interested corn-lovers.

He did not specify what the prize would be but said the corn-eating contest would take place during the town's first ever Meguyaya (thanksgiving) Festival, which would be held on Dec. 19.

Piang said 24,000 ears of corn-broiled or boiled—would be up for consumption by participants.

Piang said hundreds of people have already registered to join the contest.

He said aside from having fun, contestants and visitors would surely enjoy the town's scenery.

The Meguyaya Festival would also showcase the rich and colorful culture of "Tedudays," the dominant tribe in the town.

Asked what the rationale behind the launching of the festival is, Piang said the town's officials have decided that it was time to put the town in the country's tourism map.

"We would like to place our small yet developing town in the map of tourist destinations," he said.

Upi is not only the Corn Capital of Maguindanao but also the province's summer capital. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Delay in police revamp opens door to 'jueteng'

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—While confusion continues to hound a revamp of the Philippine National Police, jueteng lords are taking the opportunity to intensify their operations in this province.

Reports said the confusion has allowed jueteng operations to creep in from the towns' outskirts to the downtown areas, with *cobradores* (bet collectors) becoming bolder.

Officials expressed concern that jueteng lords are taking advantage of the situation as the province awaits DILG action on the appointment of the province's new police chief.

"It's getting very alarming because the longer we wait (for the DILG response), the more reports are coming to us indicating that jueteng has been proliferating," said Gov. Rodolfo Agbayani.

In a letter Dec. 3, Agbayani endorsed to Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, Cagayan Valley police director, Senior Supt. Felix Caddali as provincial police chief.

Last month, Senior Supt. Jesus Manubay was reported to be on the way out as provincial director. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Capiz folk surprised by Mar confession

By Gerry T. Pagharion
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—For years, Capiceños had been kept in the dark as to the personal life of the now resigned Trade Secretary and Senate aspirant Manuel "Mar" Roxas II.

To them, Mar is a very private person who was only thrust into the political limelight when his younger brother Capiz Rep. Gerardo "Dinggoy" Roxas Jr. died of a liver ailment in 1993.

To their mind, Mar had not sired a child from any woman and remains the "most eligible bachelor in town."

Dinggoy was also rumored to having a son reportedly from a woman belonging to the prominent Buenaventura clan. But this issue was not raised to give the younger Roxas the chance to shed light on it when he was still alive.

The fact that this particular aspect of his life was kept secret apparently did not sit well with his critics who were only too willing to capitalize on his gender preference.

A lot of Capiceños were taken aback when Roxas, 46, admitted to reporters that he has a son, 10-year-old Paolo Gerardo, shortly after he resigned from the Cabinet to run for a Senate seat.

The bachelor is a scion of the Araneta-Roxas clan and the grandson of the late President Manuel Roxas from Capiz. He was a congressman in Capiz when he took over the trade portfolio during the administration of President Joseph Estrada. He resigned shortly before Estrada was removed from power in 2001. He was re-appointed by President Macapagal.

"What? Mar had a son? From whom?" was the reaction of Renelie Urate, 21, a private tutor. "It really came as a surprise not only to me but to a lot of people whom I have talked to."

Whatever Roxas' motive is in publicly acknowledging his son, Urate said his move only endeared him and earned him respect from his provincemates.

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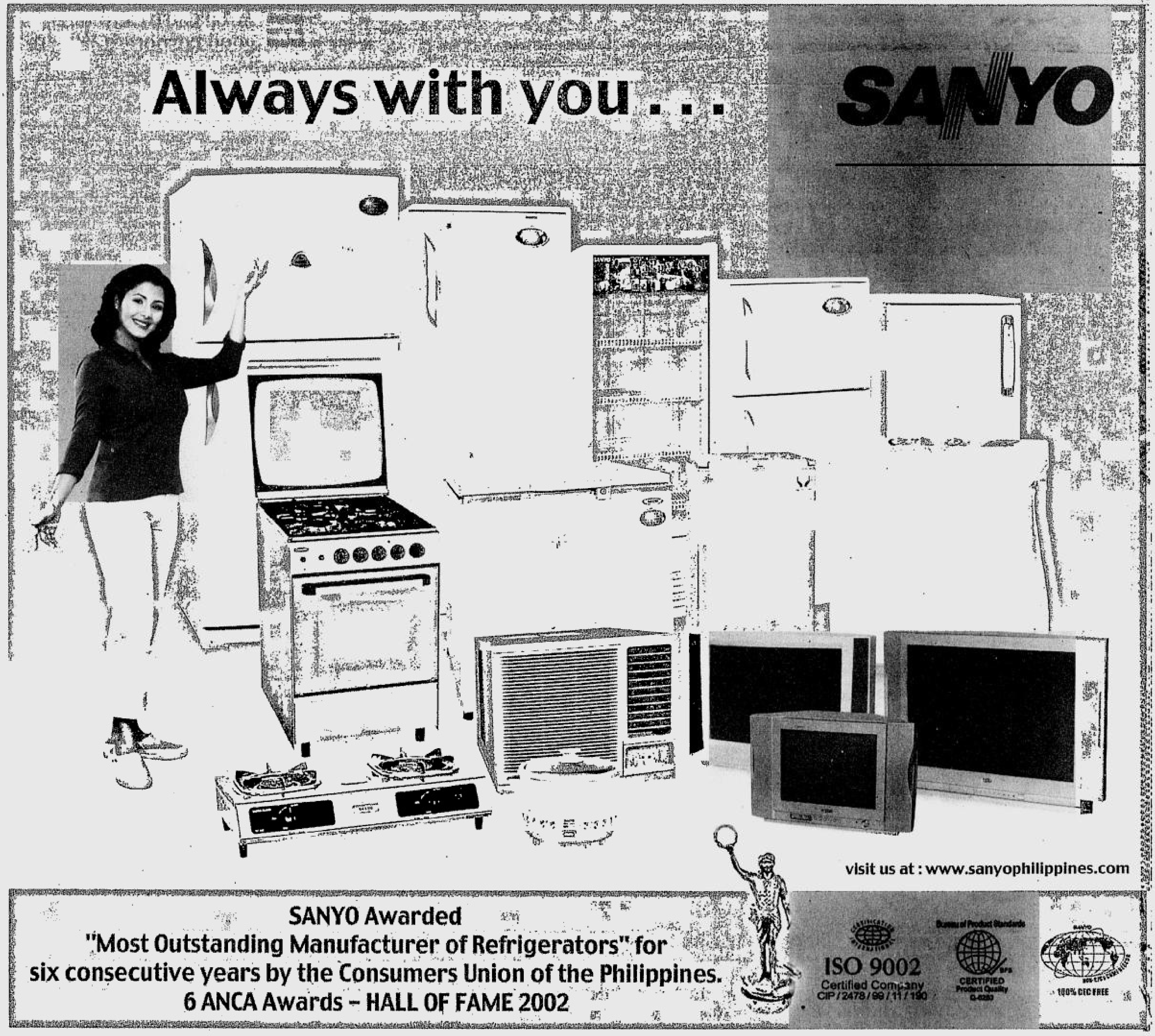
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₱5M reward did 'Robot' in, says ex-negotiator

PIDIGAN, Abra—A negotiator during the Sipadan hostage crisis in 2000 claimed that captured Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang, known as Commander Robot, was set up by some people because of the P5-million reward for his capture.

"*Ipinasubo dahil sa* P5 mil*lion na patong sa ulo niya* (He was set up because of the P5 million reward for his capture)," said retired Col. Ernesto "Dragon" Pacuno, also a distant relative of Andang, in a telephone interview on Tuesday.

Military reports said Andang's location and activities were tipped-off by a "walk-in informant" three months ago.

Pacuno, whose late wife was a cousin of Andang's second wife, said he could not believe reports that there was an encounter that led to Andang's capture.

"Why were his bullet wounds concentrated in the legs? Why didn't Robot fight it out?" Pacuno asked. "*Kilala natin kung sino at ano kakayahan ni Robot* (We know who Robot is and what he can do)."

Pacuno also claimed that Andang had long been planning to surrender but the government did not accede to his demands that his criminal cases be dropped.

Pacuno, however, declined to further comment on the military's version of Andang's capture. He said he wanted to gather more information from their relatives and other sources in Mindanao on the circumstances leading to Andang's fall.

Andang, according to the military, is suffering from a kidney disorder that could be fatal if not treated quickly.

His legs, the military said, were severely battered by gunshot wounds and have to be amputated. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

ANTI-kidnapping czar Angelo Reyes checks out license plates used by a kidnapping gang shortly after alleged gang leader Roberto Yap was killed in a raid in Bataan Nov. 20. JOAN BONDOC

'Chokepoints' in provinces eyed in bid vs kidnaps

THE GOVERNMENT is planning to expand its system of so-called "chokepoints" to the provinces to further tighten the noose around crime syndicates, particularly terrorists and kidnap-for-ransom gangs.

In a statement, Angelo Reyes, former defense secretary and head of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktaf), said he has ordered his men to study the possibility of setting up checkpoints in strategic areas outside Metro Manila.

"If we are confident of what we are doing, we will expand," he said.

"Metro Manila has been a pilot testing area as we gain more confidence and learn more lessons," he added.

"The anti-kidnapping campaign is a very, very important one."

He said criminal syndicates, especially kidnappers, who feel the heat in Metro Manila could move to the provinces where they could find safe havens from law enforcers.

"We will deprive them of that (safe havens in the provinces)," said Reyes in his statement.

The checkpoints were put in place starting on Dec. 8 following a spate of kidnappings in Metro Manila.

While the cases of kidnappings in Metro Manila receive national media attention most, Reyes said efforts should also be exerted to deprive the crime syndicates of alternative sites in the provinces where they could continue their underworld operations.

But police work appears to continue to be sloppy.

A Davao City court ordered the release of a ranking Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader after police failed to present evidence linking him to the two Davao bombings.

Mayor Muslimin Sema said Judge Paul Arcangel of the Regional Trial Court Branch 12 in Davao City on Wednesday cleared Emran Gumanod alias Commander Em of responsibility in the March airport and April Sasa bombings that killed more than 40 persons.

Sema said Arcangel found that police have no evidence that Gumanod and a bombing suspect, Solaiman Demasalang, were one and the same person.

Agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group based in Davao picked up Gumanod on July 1 to the chagrin of local and police officials. *With a report from Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Police clear NPAs of Agusan massacre

BUTUAN CITY—Police have cleared the New People's Army (NPA) of involvement in the carnage that left five people dead in a remote village of Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte on Nov. 30.

Chief Supt. Alberto Olario, regional police chief, said investigators point to a bandit group as behind the killings.

"Definitely not the NPA," he said.

Seven unidentified men, wearing ski masks, indiscriminately fired their M-16 rifles as they barged into a sari-sari store in Barangay Calamba.

Killed in the attack were Charlito Garmosa, Godofredo Botollia, Rogelio Baldo, Rogelio Dumampas and Platon Manansala.

Police earlier said communist rebels were behind the massacre but Olario said a band of tribesmen engaged in banditry was responsible for the killings.

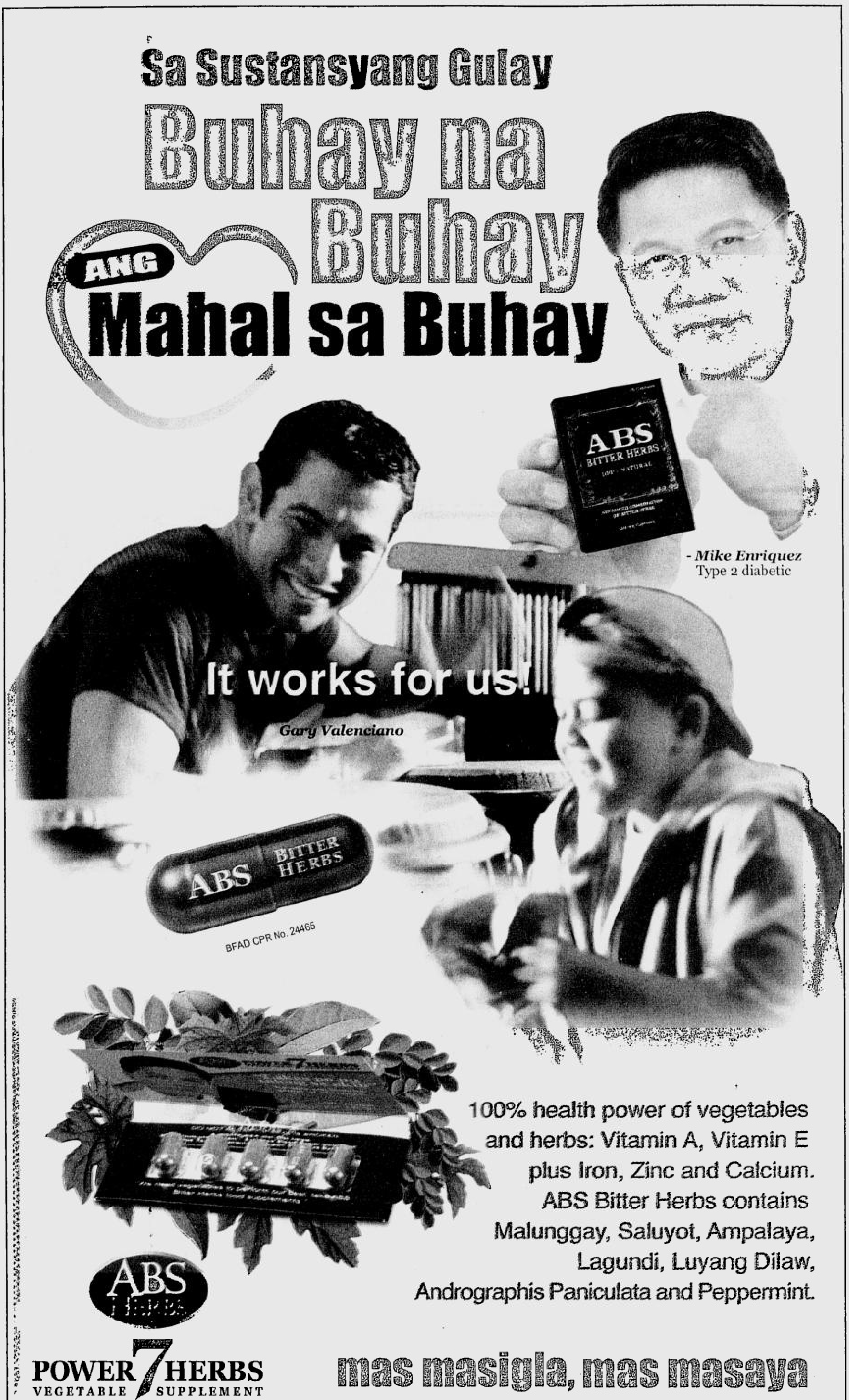
He said the bandits' intention was to rob the victims.

In Davao City, the NPA apologized for the "error" committed by its guerrillas in an attack in Pantukan, Compostela Valley Monday.

Rigoberto Sanchez, rebel spokesperson, said it was not their intention to harm civilians during the attack.

Sanchez said "our errors became a tragedy for the civilians."

Sanchez said the targets were members of the Special Operations Team of the 58th Infantry Battalion. *Franklin M. Caligiud and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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Rebellion raps filed vs NPA cadre in Bohol

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Police have filed rebellion and illegal possession of firearms charges against a man whom military sources claim is a leading cadre of the New People's Army (NPA) in Bohol.

The complaint against Alberto Miano, allegedly with aliases Bonbon and Beroy, was filed before the Tagbilaran City Prosecutor's Office on Monday.

Miano was arrested at dawn Dec. 3 in Sitio Bayong, Barangay Tanawan, Tubigon town. Seized from him were a firearm and communist documents.

Attached in the complaint was an affidavit of a former rebel whom the police asked not to be identified for security reasons.

In his affidavit, the ex-rebel said Miano used the code "Bonbon" while he was operating in Barangay Dagohoy, Bilar town. Miano allegedly used the code "Beroy" while he operated in Barangay Hanopol, Balilihan town.

2 men, woman killed in drive-by shooting in Davao car wash

DAVAO CITY—At least three persons, including a woman, were killed in a mid-afternoon shooting at a car wash shop in Agdao district here on Wednesday.

Police said Rodel Tungula, owner of Clemens Carwash Shop, Eliong Rivera, car wash shop manager, and Richie Limboran, were in the shop's office when two men on a black Yamaha DT motorcycle arrived and started shooting. *Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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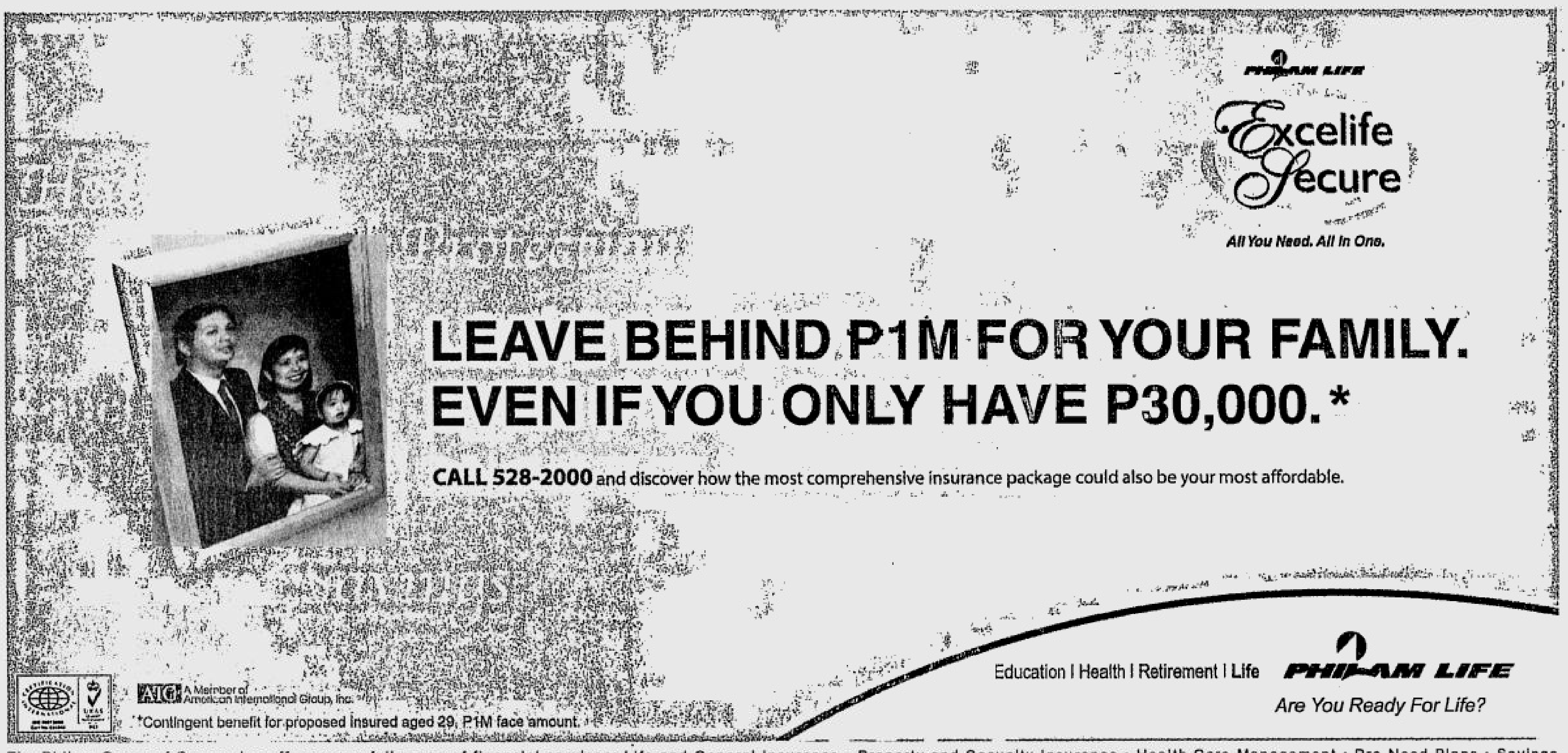
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Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

A forgotten Cebuano carol lingers

By Juan L. Mercado
Cebu City

WE'VE put up the traditional Christmas star parol and belen. We lit the Advent wreath's first purple candle. All bring back memories of singing a hijacked Visayan carol in a Thai church.

At the graceful Thai-style Holy Redeemer Church on Bangkok's Ruam Rudee Lane, Christmas Mass had just ended. Suddenly, the choir leader bolted to his feet. "Before you leave," he told surprised parishioners, "we'll sing for you a Filipino Christmas carol."

The choir then belted out: Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit, probably the most popular Filipino carol.

Thais, Swedes, Germans, Nigerians, Americans and others clapped along as the melody rang out: *Nang si Kristo ay isinilang /May tatlong hari na dumalaw* ("When Christ shone forth/ Three kings came to pay homage").

A few knew—or particularly cared—that they were singing a Tagalog adaptation of the 1933 Cebuano carol: *Kasadya Ning Takna-a* ("How Joyful Is This Season").

A gentle Cebuano composer Vicente Rubi jotted down the notes of this daygon (carol) for a Christmas festival that year. Mariano Vestil, another Cebuano, wrote the lyrics.

Forgotten

Today, carolers in Cebu still sing the lilting beat and lyrics that the now-barely-remembered Rubi and Vestil blended 70 years ago. *Bulahan ang tagbalay nga giawitan* ("Blessed the homes that carolers sing to").

But singing that daygon in the Bangkok Redemptorist Church was, at least for Visayans familiar with their cultural roots: chiaroscuro or bittersweet.

In that Christmas rite, who were the Visayans who recalled the original Cebuano carol?

Jose V. Abueva had, by then, left for Tokyo's United Nations University. He later became University of the Philippines president. International Labor Organization's Ernesto Pernia had gone to the Asian Development Bank, and is now chief economist.

But ship captain Ariston Roxas was there. So was his wife Justin, who heads Mary Poppins kindergarten school. Food and Agriculture Organization's econometrician Edmundo Prantilla and wife, Judy Ann, as well as engineer Noel Bersabe and physician-wife, Jing, sang along.

"It's the supremest of ironies in a country that boasts of the longest celebration of Christmas," Jullie Yap Daza wrote in the Times Journal in 1978. "But not a trace of effort has been made to attribute the beloved carol *Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit* to its author, Vicente D. Rubi."

Exploited

By then, Rubi was an old impoverished widower, confined in a Cebu hospital. His carol had been hijacked by a recording company for P150. At today's post-Fernando Poe candidacy exchange rate, that's $2.68!

Cebuanos recall the frail old man would shuffle to teach carolers, at his gate, how to sing his carol right. "Nong Inting" died in 1980, denied "what is due him in royalties," now Manila Standard editor Yap-Daza wrote.

This is raw exploitation. Today's jargon calls that "Intellectual Property Rights" theft. But are those who ripped off the gentle musician and his lyricist different from those who stole farmers blind of their coconut levy?

Recording companies conned Rubi and Vestil—and presumably other artists like them—with legal dodges.

Is that any better than generals who gutted soldiers' retirement funds?

Critics say the Filipino elite converts the difference into pesos. "We live by "pecuniary decency," a banker explains. "Net worth equals self-worth." As Imelda Marcos crassly boasted in an interview: "Why, we practically own all of the Philippines."

Do these make a mockery of the festival that this carol sings of? "Bagong tuig, bagong kinabuhi," the Cebuano original, and its Tagalog adaptation, proclaim.

It echoes the Advent cry of Isaiah: "Break the fetters of injustice ... and break every yoke/ Then, will your light break forth as the morning."

Christmas scrooge

"But I hate Christmas," wrote a reader to the influential Bangkok Post. "I can't stand Jingle Bells, tinsel, Bing Crosby crooning White Christmas, and the overeating, carousing."

"Scrooge improved on you," came a swift response in the same paper. "He did it with one word in Charles Dickens' novel: A Christmas Carol: Humbug!"

"Yet, you are more logical than Scrooge," the response went on. "From the ghosts of Christmases-past, you identify this day with its non-essentials: red-nosed reindeers, Santa's ho-ho-ho and chestnuts roasting on an open fire.

"In reality, Christmas is about a Child, cradled by his mother, who went on to heal the sick, fed the hungry, showed compassion for the outcasts, preferred to serve rather than be served and forgave his executioners.

"He gave answers to basic questions, such as pain, suffering and death, that confronts ordinary mortals like us. He was to say: I am the resurrection and the life. This is what our Christmases-yet-to-come could be."

"*Duyogan ta sa atong pagbati ... aron sa kalipay ta maka-angkon,*" the Visayan version urges. "Sing with our hearts/ so joy will be ours."

"*Tayo ay magmahalan ... / Kahit hindi Pasko, magbigayan,*" goes the Tagalog adaptation. "Let us love another / And share even after Christmas Day ends ..."

It's the same hope. And it suffuses both carols.

A FACADE of the Holy Redeemer Church on Ruamrudee Lane in Bangkok. This church is served by the Redemptorist fathers, explaining the familiar photo of Our Mother of Perpetual Help is on its facade. PHOTO TAKEN FROM HARMONY YEARBOOK

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Of robots and first spouses

BACOLOD EXCHANGE

Ninfa R. Leonarda

THE CAPTURE of Abu Sayyaf leader Ghalib Andang, better known as Commander Robot, was hailed by Negrenses as it must have been by people in other provinces. Because he had caused so much inconvenience to the province and the city while he was head of the Air Transportation Office, residents immediately remembered the case of Panfilo Villaruel who was not captured, but was virtually mowed down at the NAIA control tower. To them, Commander Robot was lucky he hadn't been hunted down by the SWAT, only by the military. Otherwise, he wouldn't be around to tell stories, and with bullet wounds in his legs only.

***

Bacolod City recently acquired a new police chief, Senior Supt. Mario Avenido, who took over from Senior Supt. George Bajelot, who was assigned to the Regional Mobile Group in Victorias City. Although scored by the media and local groups for a seemingly lackluster performance, Bajelot could be credited for his relentless support to the anti-drug campaigns of his men. The new chief, who comes from the Directorate of the Maritime Group, is still being eyed askance by residents. Being the choice of the mayor, his entry is being assessed by the role he will play in the coming elections.

The election fever has really caught on in the province with the most interesting developments being expected in the fifth district. This is where the seat of incumbent Rep. Apolinario "Jun" Lozada is being challenged by presidential brother-in-law, Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, the privacy man also known, maybe better known, as Jose Pidal.

Another exciting area is Talisay City in the north, where businessman Ramon Lacson is openly moving toward city hall where incumbent Anthony Lizares, who had succeeded his own father as mayor, had every intention of holding on. The latest in the city was a call from the mayor for the transfer of Comelec Action Officer Susan Araiza for alleged partisan activities. Araiza denied the allegations, pointing out that she did not even know the personalities involved.

***

The two provinces on Negros Island, Occidental and Oriental, are jubilant for being chosen as among the 18 awardees of the coveted Galing Pook Awards.

The citations and cash awards were handed out in Malacañang last week. Negros Oriental won added honors as Bayawan City, Basay and Sta. Catalina towns were also declared Galing Pook awardees.

Neither Bacolod City nor any other town in Negros Occidental made it to the awards. This elicited a lot of deprecating jokes among the award-loving residents of Bacolod. No project of any note has obviously merited one.

A former prosecutor, however, said there were two projects that the administration of Mayor Luzviminda Valdez could be proud of—Logic Gate, and the smoke emission tests. That drew a lot of laughter, because the latter had been a very controversial installation, while the former earned the mayor a complaint before the Ombudsman. It was later elevated to a criminal case and is still pending.

The Galing Pook presentations also brought out other strange developments in the city, such as the groundbreaking held by the mayor for the supposed construction of a bridge in Barangay Taculing. After the much-publicized rites, it was exposed in local media that the bridge could not be built at all since the city did not own the land at the other end.

There is also the architect's plan for the supposed improved Bacolod City Hall that has perplexed taxpayers. The huge plan, displayed for months now where anybody who goes to city hall can see it, is curling at the edges and yellowing already.

City hall workers say it is only for "effect," because the city has no funds to implement it. The Sanggunian Panlungsod has neither approved it nor appropriated anything for it. But of course out-of-towners are impressed.

***

There's a lot of excitement here over the announcement of the candidacy of Fernando Poe Jr. for president.

The interest is stronger among former classmates of Mrs. Poe, the former Jesusa Sonora, now known as Susan Roces of local moviedom fame. Susan was a student of La Consolacion College in Bacolod where she had excelled in stage presentations.

If FPJ wins, Bacolod will have a first lady, but it is not really a novelty. First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, husband of President Macapagal, also has his roots in Binalbagan town, Negros Occidental. Whichever of the two make it, Negrenses will still have the distinction of having a "kasimanwa" as first spouse.

FPJ takes stand vs globalization

From page A1

leaders happened before the forum started, after Poe arrived at 8:45 a.m., or 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the forum.

He, Mariano, Sotto and KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos met at the PCED Hostel coffee shop for around half an hour until news photographers arrived to take shots of their informal conference..

Poe then excused himself and told organizers he had another appointment at 9:30 a.m., leaving Sotto to address the electoral forum.

"We just had an exchange of ideas with Ka Paeng and his other leaders," Poe told the INQUIRER as he made his way through the phalanx of photographers to his waiting SUV.

Wanted: platform

"Senator Sotto would be the one to discuss these issues at length," he added rather apologetically for his seeming sudden decision to leave.

Mariano said that while Poe gave "strong signals" that he was against the country's participation in the World Trade Organization and its commitments under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, they were awaiting for more concrete manifestation from the candidate when the campaign period starts.

"We have yet to see his platform of government. It will be up to him if he would include the inputs that we gave him about the plight of farmers in light of globalization," Mariano said.

Both Ramos and Mariano said that Poe listened intently to the KMP's position against trade liberalization and the need for food security and self-sufficiency.

Nodding every now and then

"He was listening and nodding every now and then. We take it that he didn't differ greatly with our position," Ramos said.

Mariano said another presidential candidate, ex-Sen. Raul Roco, sent word that he could not come and instead sent a copy of his platform of government, showing that he was for honoring the country's agreements with the international community on the issue of globalization.

Unity doubts

As for President Macapagal-Arroyo, Mariano said: "We didn't invite her because we already know that she is against the interests of the small farmers and fisherfolk."

Fresh from another foreign trip, former President Fidel V. Ramos immediately waded into the political waters yesterday, saying he doubted Poe's ability to unite the nation.

The obvious reason, Ramos said, is that Poe cannot even unite the main opposition party Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP).

"He (Poe) cannot even unite the LDP. He cannot unite two people in the LDP who cannot get their act together," Ramos quipped, referring to LDP secretary general Agapito "Butz" Aquino and LDP president Edgardo Angara.

Poe and Lacson have been endorsed by different factions in the LDP.

Ramos also repeated his earlier statement that the country "deserved someone better" than Poe as president.

Split 4 ways

Ramos also said the support by some businessmen for the candidacy of Sen. Noli de Castro, whom they perceive to be the only candidate capable of beating Poe in next year's elections, would be advantageous to the administration Lakas-CMD party and its standard-bearer, President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Then it will be one Lakas candidate versus an opposition split four ways. I will not explain any more the numerical advantage there," Ramos said, with a smile.

He also explained that recent surveys showing Ms Macapagal trailing Poe and Roco would not have a big effect on public opinion. Ramos explained that present surveys were mere "snapshots" of the political climate.

"What we should watch out (for) are trends not surveys," Ramos said.

Lacson's deferral

In the Senate, the standard-bearer endorsed by one LDP faction said he would defer the filing of his certificate of candidacy until he meets with Poe.

And Sen. Panfilo Lacson said he believes Poe would do the same.

Lacson's camp had earlier said that the opposition senator would file his certificate of candidacy before the Commission on Elections on Dec. 15, the first day of the filing period that ends on Jan. 2, 2004.

"I'm not going to file until we have talked," Lacson said at a news conference. "And I suppose that he (Poe) would do the same thing."

Lacson said he and Poe would definitely meet for a second time because the camp of the popular movie actor has already sent word for them to have a meeting. ***With reports from Christine Avendaño and Alcuin Papa***

De Castro bid tackled in secret London meet

From page A1

was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo ambassador to the Court of St. James about five months ago.

He had been the chief fund raiser of former President Joseph Estrada in the 1998 presidential campaign, and of the late Speaker Ramon Mitra in the 1992 presidential race.

Espiritu disclosed to the INQUIRER that a significant number of businessmen want De Castro to run because "Noli is the only one who can beat FPJ or Fernando Poe Jr."

Funding sources

The source said it was Espiritu who invited Arroyo to meet with him in London. Among other things, the two men discussed possible funding sources for a De Castro campaign.

The INQUIRER source disclosed that Arroyo and Espiritu have been "good friends" for sometime.

The source also pointed out that Arroyo was chair of the Philippine National Bank when Espiritu was its president during the Aquino administration.

Confirmations

The INQUIRER tried but failed to get Arroyo's comment yesterday.

But his staff members confirmed that the senator known for his fierce independence had flown to London after a brief stay in Paris.

It was learned that the senator left Manila early this week to attend the graduation of his daughter, Maoi, from England's Cambridge University.

Sen. Manuel Villar, another member of the Wednesday Group, also confirmed that Arroyo was in London. But he did not elaborate.

The Kabayan for President Movement yesterday said that both the administration and the opposition are afraid of De Castro for his vote-getting potential.

Isko Katibayan, spokesperson of the KPM, said the administration party Lakas-CMD wants De Castro to be President Macapagal's running mate because he is more popular than the President.

As for the opposition, Katibayan said that the fake Pulse Asia survey that showed Poe as the leading presidential candidate didn't even include De Castro's name. It is a sign that the group is desperate to erase the independent senator from the political radar screen, according to Katibayan.

Taiwan ties

To prove that the Wednesday Group is serious about De Castro as a presidential candidate, the INQUIRER source said that two weeks ago, Arroyo and the other members of the group went to Taiwan upon the invitation of the Lin family.

The Taiwanese family has been listed several times in Fortune Magazine's list of the world's 500 richest people.

Eager to meet Kabayan

The super-rich family owns Building 101, which is currently being constructed in Taipei to rival the tallest building in the world, the Petronas Towers in Malaysia.

"The family did not hide their eagerness to personally meet De Castro, noting that he has been a consistent topnotcher in surveys for presidentiables," the INQUIRER source said.

De Castro could not make it because of prior commitments in Manila.

The request for the senators' visit to Taiwan was coursed through top Filipino Chinese businessmen in Manila.

The meeting coincided with the trip of another Wednesday Group member, Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate foreign relations committee.

One-China policy

Villar went to Taiwan following the decision of Foreign Secretary Blas Ople to bar the visit to Manila of the Taiwanese vice president and the foreign minister due to the Philippine government's One-China policy.

Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian personally received Villar in the presidential palace.

The source said the highly publicized meeting of Chen and Villar allowed the other senators to privately meet with the Lin family.

Quoting the senators, the source described the reception accorded the lawmakers as "befitting members of royalty."

'Aventajado haggling . . .

From page A1

but his wife has aired a vehement denial.

Hoax

Yesterday, a relative of Wee's, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "The Malaysians were able to tape Aventajado haggling for his part of the ransom money for the Malaysian hostages."

Contacted by the INQUIRER by phone, Aventajado said he knew about the tape but quickly dismissed it as a hoax hatched by Hamdan.

"It was created by Wee's sidekick," Aventajado said, referring to Hamdan. "Those who heard the tape playing did not even understand a word uttered. He is a small-time rice dealer who was only pushed by the Wees to float the tape."

Aventajado said Hamdan called him up yesterday threatening to release the tape. "I dare them to make it public so I can sue them," he told the INQUIRER.

Best of friends

Lawyer James Hassan said that among those present at the negotiations were Datu Asis Samsudin, former education minister of Malaysia, and Datu Yang Tikli, former chief minister of Sabah.

Hassan also expressed surprise that Aventajado would make such an accusation against Wee. "They used to be the best of friends," he said.

The lawyer also said Aventajado failed to mention that Wee played a crucial role in the release of the Malaysian hostages.

He said even former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad thanked Wee for this in September 2000 in Kota Kinabalu.

An adviser of Wee's, who asked not to be named, said the man was "well respected" in Malaysia because "he spent a big part of his own money to obtain the release of the hostages."

Hamdan said he was willing to supply details on the negotiations. "We owe the world the truth, and Aventajado is not telling the entire story," he said.

Robot

The military is pinning its hopes on captured Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang, widely known as Commander Robot, to establish the veracity of Aventajado's claims in his book and in interviews.

"He can be one of the sources," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, the Armed Forces' chief information officer, noting that the military also had in custody Nadzmie Sabdullah, aka Commander Global, who was captured in July 2001.

"But as I said earlier, we should not accept [Andang's] word point-blank. We will not take his word as gospel truth. Remember this is a criminal," Lucero yesterday told reporters.

But the military cannot interrogate Andang until he fully recovers. His wounded left leg was amputated late Tuesday night, and he has been diagnosed as suffering from a kidney ailment.

Shortly after his capture Sunday night in Indanan, Sulu, Andang claimed that he had pocketed only P10 million of the P400-million ransom paid for the freedom of the Sipadan hostages.

But Lucero said that while Andang's claims about those who supposedly shared in the ransom payments could mitigate the charges against him, he could not escape the maximum penalty of death.

"Yes, there's a big possibility that the death penalty would be meted out against him for kidnapping for ransom and murder," Lucero said, noting that Andang's former hostages, including Filipino Roland Ulla, had expressed willingness to testify.

Operational details

In Tokyo, President Macapagal-Arroyo left it to authorities to decide whether Andang would be made a state witness to go after other leaders of the Abu Sayyaf.

"Those are operational details," she told reporters in an after-dinner talk Wednesday night at the Imperial Palace. "In my role as President, I talk about strategic directions; the operational details I leave to the ones that will implement policy."

But she said Andang would "definitely play a vital role in shedding light on a number of questions regarding the Sipadan hostage-taking."

"He and his cohorts will be brought to justice so we can let out the truth and close this bizarre chapter in our history," she said.

In a statement issued yesterday morning, the President said: "We want, and we shall pursue, justice for the Sipadan hostages just like in any kidnapping case.

"We are determined to show terrorists and criminals that such heinous crimes will not go unpunished, and that there will always be an end of the road in the hands of the criminal justice system."

Verify statements

Former President Fidel Ramos also thinks that Andang can verify Aventajado's claims as well as provide the government more information.

"I hope he will continue to be a source of information on the matter," Ramos said at a press conference upon his arrival in Manila yesterday from China and Malaysia. "Of course whatever he says is colored. But his statements can be verified by military intelligence."

Ramos added that during his trip, Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi expressed elation over Andang's capture.

Test case

Rep. Prospero Nograles urged the Anti-Money Laundering Council and other law enforcement authorities to seize the assets of Abu Sayyaf leaders, particularly Andang.

"This shocking revelation of huge ransom payoffs should serve as a test case of our Anti-Money Laundering Law, and this is a perfect occasion for the government to show its resolve to end the Abu Sayyaf's reign of terror," he said.

Nograles, who was part of the delegation that accompanied the President to Tokyo to attend the Asean-Japan commemorative summit, said the AMLC, National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine National Police should start tracing the cash paid to the Abu Sayyaf in exchange for the freedom of its hostages.

Rep. Prospero Pichay renewed his call for Andang's immediate prosecution.

"He murdered and beheaded people, raped women, and devastated our economy," Pichay said in a statement. "Even local investors left the country for fear of the Abu Sayyaf, and this affected the livelihood of our people. He must now answer for all his sins." ***With reports from TJ Burgonio, Alcuin Papa and Cynthia D. Balana in Manila; Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. in Tokyo***

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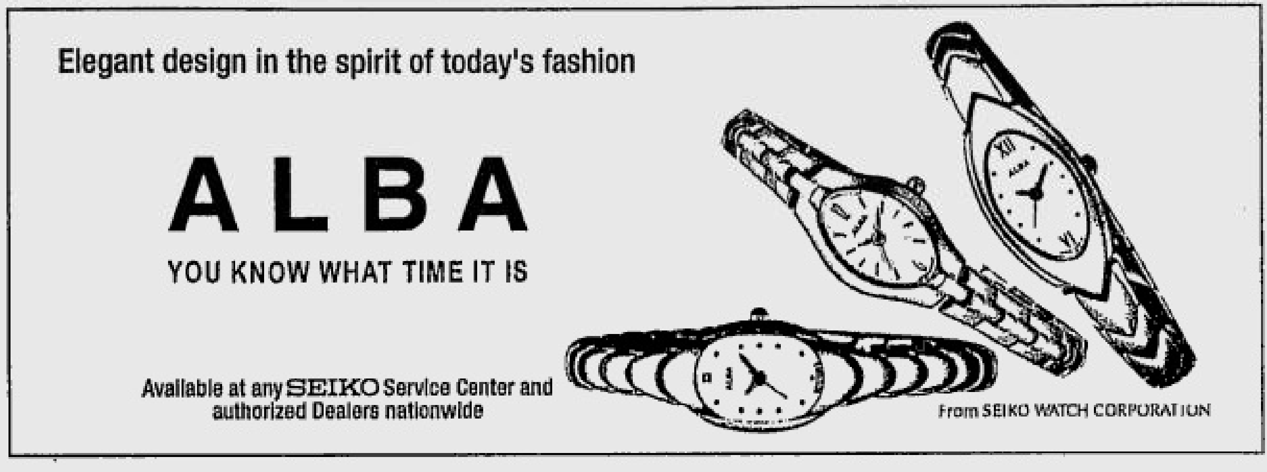

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Japan vows more aid after gov't peace …

From page A1

donesia-Malaysia-Philippine East Asia Growth Area (BIMP-Eaga), President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

Poverty linked to terrorism

The President said that in her bilateral talks with Koizumi, she talked about the link between poverty and terrorism. She told the Japanese leader it was important to spur investments and promote trade in the BIMP-Eaga, to prevent it from becoming the recruiting ground for terrorists.

In her statement at the closing session of the two-day Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit here, the President noted that Japan has extended financial support for the development of the Greater Mekong area, which covers Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

"We urge Japan to provide similar support to the other subregional growth areas, like the BIMP-Eaga, to maintain a secure, united and prosperous Asean community," Ms Macapagal said.

The President said the BIMP-Eaga would greatly benefit from Japanese assistance, specifically through human resource development (HRD) projects, physical infrastructure, and trade and investment inflows.

Abdullah, too

The President also said she obtained the assurance of Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi of his government's continued participation in the country's bid to forge a peace accord with the MILF.

Ms Macapagal and Abdullah, who replaced Malaysia's longtime leader Mahathir Mohammad, also held bilateral talks during a lull in the summit.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President expressed her appreciation to Abdullah for Malaysia's role in facilitating the resumption of the formal peace talks.

THE ASEAN-JAPAN declaration is signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo at the end of the Asian-Japan summit in Tokyo Friday. She is flanked by Singaporean Prime Minister Go Chok Tong (right) and Burmese Prime Minister Khin Nyunt.

PCPO-MALACAÑANG PHOTO

The talks are expected to resume the second week of January; Malaysia's ceasefire monitoring team is expected to arrive this month in preparation for the talks.

Bunye also said the President thanked the Malaysian official for particular development projects in Mindanao, including a palm oil plantation, a joint venture of Filipino and Malaysian businessmen. The President, Bunye said, requested Abdullah to allow the Philippines to import palm oil seeds from Malaysia in order to hasten the development of this commodity in the country.

President Fidel V. Ramos, who also met with Abdullah, said the Malaysian government was optimistic about the outcome of the peace negotiations.

In a press briefing upon his arrival from China and Malaysia, Ramos said he discussed bilateral economic issues and the peace negotiations with the Malaysian leader.

"The Malaysian government has been very helpful to us and they are optimistic about the future and the outcome of the negotiations between the Philippine government and the MILF," Ramos told reporters.

He explained that Malaysia was now the chair of the eight-nation committee representing the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in the region.

Ramos also revealed that Abdullah is committed to sending a Malaysian military monitoring team to the country to look at the implementation of rules governing the negotiations.

"That is a good step and a sign of goodwill from the OIC. It is to make sure the Philippine government and the MILF, specifically the Lost Commands, observe the rules," Ramos said. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

Defense chief trying to derail peace talks, claims MILF

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front yesterday lashed back at Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita "for fabricating stories aimed at sabotaging the peace process."

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said it appears that Ermita was trying to destroy the MILF's image in the international community when he claimed the rebel group was divided.

"We are still solid and intact. His statement Thursday only shows that he is not sincere in talking peace with us. We believed that his statement is not the position of Malacañang," Kabalu said.

Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said the issue should have been discussed within the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities and not with the media "because it would affect the ongoing peace talks."

Conditioning

Kabalu said it was obvious that Ermita was also conditioning the minds of the people when he said the split in the MILF leaders' position on the peace talks could lead to the collapse of the process.

He said Ermita wanted the MILF blamed if the peace talks fail.

Ermita had alleged that a power struggle in the MILF is shaping up between the MILF's peace advocates and hard-liners, particularly sub-commanders who continue to coddle Jemaah Islamiyah elements, and that this could derail the peace talks.

Running out of bullets

"He's using us as a scapegoat because they failed to comply with their commitments in the exploratory meetings," Kabalu said in another interview, referring to the dropping of charges against top leaders and troop pullout from a former stronghold.

"It seems Ermita is fast running out of bullets to destroy the MILF," he added.

"The problem is not with us but with the government because they have still not implemented what we have agreed before," Kabalu said.

He said the government has not pulled its troops out of the Buliok complex, contrary to the agreement reached during the March 6 exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur. *Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau; with a report from TJ Burgonio*

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Vatican names Novo Ecijano first Fil-Am bishop in US

From page A1

Jadulco noted that there were already Vietnamese and Chinese bishops in the United States, and that Solis' appointment was made "in the spirit of a multicultural church."

He said Filipinos were "one in heart" in celebrating Solis' recognition.

No less proud are members of the bishop's family, including his sisters Celia Solis-Tapia and Helen Solis, both based in Manila.

Officials of his hometown said his appointment was San Jose's crowning glory.

"He brought big honor to the Philippines and Filipinos because of this singular achievement," his cousin Nanet Azarcon-Lucban said in San Jose.

'Compassionate shepherd'

Solis is known as a "compassionate shepherd," Fr. Lonnie Cheramie said in a separate phone interview.

"He serves people by working and walking with them in their journeys," Cheramie said. "He is known for doing things for the poor."

Cheramie and Jadulco are Solis' two associates at the St. Joseph Co-Cathedral Thibodaux, of which he has been pastor since 1999.

Solis has conducted fundraisers for the food bank in Los Angeles and for the "care of those who come knocking on the church door for financial assistance," Cheramie said.

The bishop is also credited with the establishment of the cathedral's crisis pregnancy center, which provides counseling and medical services to women considering abortion, as well as pre-natal checkups to those who cannot afford regular visits to a doctor.

Personal choice

Solis was ordained in his hometown in 1979, and served in the archdiocese of Manila and the diocese of Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija.

It was his personal choice to migrate to the United States, Lucban said. "It's better for me to migrate because the priests in that country are few," she quoted him as saying then.

Solis was first assigned to the archdiocese of Newark and then to the diocese of Houma Thibodaux when he came to the United States in 1984.

He served as associate pastor of the St. Joseph Co-Cathedral Thibodaux in 1988 before being transferred to Our Lady of Prompt Succor church in Golden Meadow as pastor. He returned to the St. Joseph Co-Cathedral in 1999.

Collaborative style

Jadulco described Solis as "a good leader, a very pro-people priest, and a good administrator."

"He is well-liked by people," Cheramie said, adding that Solis' leadership style was "collaborative: he does not impose, he works alongside us."

Solis also served in the Diocesan Personnel Board, the College of Consultors, the Priests Council, the South Lafourche Deanery and the Upper Lafourche Deanery.

He holds degrees in philosophy and theology, and completed studies in Oriental religions and cultures for his postgraduate course.

He is the third priest from the diocese of Houma Thibodaux to be given a leadership role in the US Catholic community.

Recent visit

Lucban said the bishop last visited San Jose on Oct. 30 and stayed for three days. He officiated at Masses at the cathedral and at a church in Barangay Kita-kita, also in San Jose.

Solis is the fourth of seven children of Anselmo Solis, a former insurance underwriter, and Antonia Azarcon, a former public school principal. One of his brothers, Ronald, is also a priest.

He spent grade school in San Jose before entering the seminary in Tagaytay City and going on to further studies at the University of Sto. Tomas. *With a report from Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

METROBRIEFS

‘Mayor’ crosses red light

TWENTY-SIX-YEAR-OLD Constantine Tang, a businessman from Binondo, Manila, was arrested yesterday in Manila after he reportedly drove through a red light and then refused to hand over his license when accosted. According to SPO2 Antonio Emmanuel, Tang was apprehended by SPO4 Alfredo Cui at the corner of Maceda and Retiro Streets in Sampaloc at noon for turning right on Retiro while the light was still red. Police later discovered that the commemorative plate on Tang's silver Honda CRV which said "Mayor" has expired. *Leila Salaverria*

P1 million plus jail time

SPO1 Rolando Punzalan, a policeman assigned at the Intelligence Division of the Mandaluyong Police Station, was found guilty of shooting Danilo Comeo, a security guard from Parcel Street, Sta. Mesa, Manila, yesterday. Court records showed that about 4 p.m. on May 20, 2001, when residents on Cordillera Street in Sta. Mesa were celebrating their fiesta, Comeo came out of his house allegedly drunk and upset after his sister scolded him because of his drinking habit. While he was walking along Cordillera Street, he came upon Punzalan who pointed a gun at his chest before firing a shot. Apart from sending the convict to a possible eight to 14 years in prison, the court told Punzalan to pay P1,123,808 to the family of Comeo. *Tarra Quismundo*

Manila to reward execs

REWARD awaits Manila's barangay officials who have been serving city's residents for the past nine years. The Manila City Council has passed an ordinance that will give distinguished public service awards to barangay officials who have spent three consecutive terms in their post. Qualified officials from the city's 897 barangays include chair and kagawads who are about to finish their terms without ever facing criminal or administrative charges. *Tarra Quismundo*

Drunk stabs friend

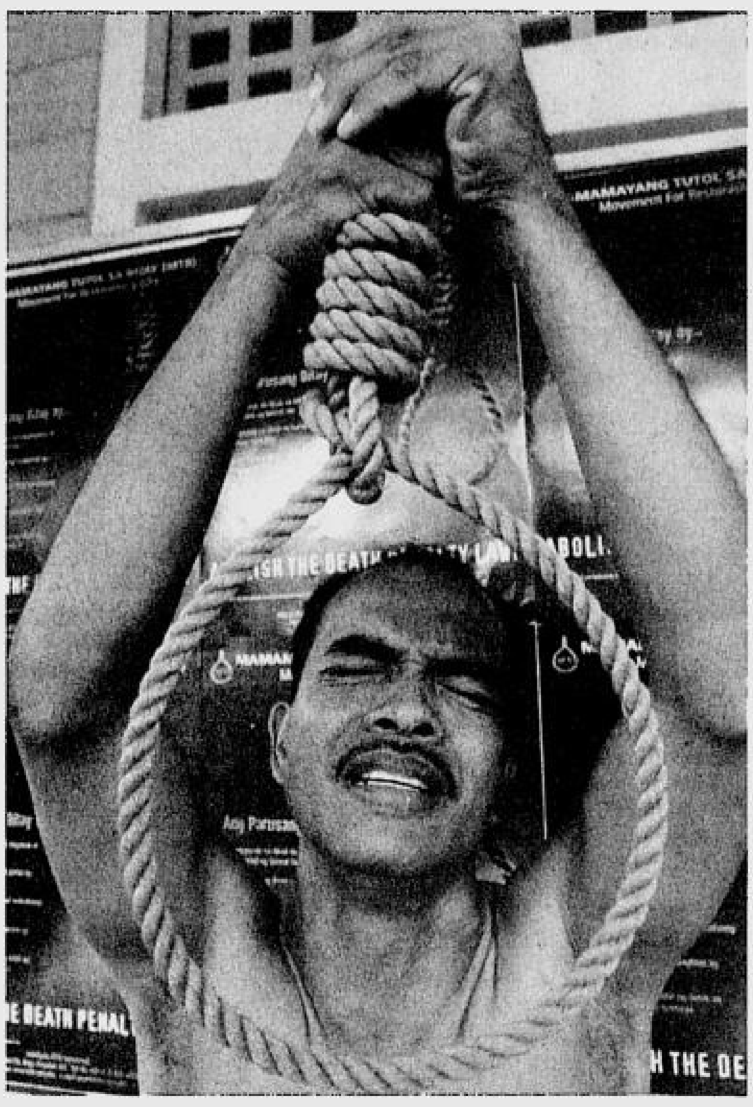
CONRADO Rice, 39, never thought that sharing a bottle of gin with his friend could endanger his life. Because when his friend Ferdinand Santos, 33, got drunk, Santos ran wild and allegedly stabbed him twice. On Thursday, Rice reportedly had a drinking spree with Santos and another friend along Flores Street, Barangay Flores, Malabon City at 9:45 p.m. When Santos got drunk, he allegedly pulled out a knife and stabbed Rice, hitting the victim in the thigh and belly. Witnesses brought the victim to the Tondo Medical Center, where he was treated. Santos was collared by barangay watchmen. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Assumption homecoming

THE ASSUMPTION Antipolo Alumnae Association (AAAA) will be holding its grand alumnae homecoming today with a concert entitled "Playback." Sponsored by Dove and Libresse, this acoustic concert will feature music bands Stonefree, MYMP and Hazy Plane and will be held at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Assumption Antipolo at 5 p.m. Tickets are available at P200 each. For inquiries, contact Deanne Dalisay at 912-3711 or 0920-5786348. Assumption Antipolo alumni can also contact their respective batch representatives regarding this event.

Holy Trinity Reunion

THE HOLY Trinity Academy is urging all graduates to attend the reunion at the HTA campus in Paraiso, Sagay City, Negros Occidental on Dec. 26, 27 and 28. For details, please call Evelyn Arsenio or Rodolfo Puro at (034) 435-0356, (632) 435-0356 and cell phone number (0917) 301-1295. You may also call Noel Valdez, school principal, at (034) 488-0086 and (632) 488-0086.



A MEMBER of the group Mamamayan Tutol sa Bitay (MTB), a movement seeking the abolition of death penalty in the country, dramatizes the gruesome nature of capital punishment. MTB spokesperson Nymia Simbulan accused President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday of sacrificing the lives of convicts to boost her political ambitions. JOAN BONDOC

GMA suspends sale of mental health property

By Volt Contreras

GIVING in to protests, Malacañang has indefinitely postponed public bidding for the 71-hectare property which hosts the state-run National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) and the Correctional Institute for Women.

Two Cabinet officials yesterday explained that the President's decision was in response to clamor by NCMH workers and the need to review measures for softening the sale's impact on the lives of health workers, patients and inmates, who all face eviction.

Referred to as Parcel 1, the 71-hectare portion of the 100-hectare Welfareville Compound was supposed to be opened for bidding on Jan. 12 next year.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman clarified, however, that bidding for the 29-hectare Parcel 2 will proceed as scheduled on Jan. 5.

The government is allotting that part of Welfareville exclusively for mass housing.

"Parcel 1 will be sold only when housing projects in Parcel 2 are in place," Soliman, who heads the Trustee Committee overseeing the sale, said in a press conference in Quezon City.

In the same forum, Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos confirmed that the city was interested in Parcel 2.

Two attempts to bid out Welfareville in the '90s failed because of the question of where to move the informal settlers, Soliman said. This "lesson" led to the current tact of selling the land in parcels.

Since last October, the NCMH's 1,800 employees have been demonstrating against the sale of Parcel 1.

Apart from worrying about their job security, they are questioning the viability of the plan to distribute the center's 3,000 patients among regional hospitals.

Speaking for the employees, NCMH Administrative Services chief Clarita Aguilar said, "We are not totally happy" with the postponement, since the sale can still proceed any time in the future.

"This is just to appease the employees for now, perhaps just 'pogi' (brownie) points for the President in view of the coming elections," she told the INQUIRER.

Convict appeals to Gloria, ‘Spare us!’

By Tina Santos

LENIDO Lumanog, one of five men convicted for the murder of former Col. Rolando Abadilla, is fighting death on two fronts from a hospital bed in Quezon City.

Lumanog, 47, is struggling to keep the new kidney that is keeping him alive and is appealing to President Macapagal-Arroyo to lift the death penalty which is awaiting convicts like him.

"I hope the President would reconsider her stand and bring back the moratorium (on death penalty)," Lumanog said, appealing for the hundreds of convicts on death row.

He has been confined at the National Kidney and Transplant Insitute for the past year, spending P40,000 a month for drugs so that his body would not reject the kidney transplanted from his wife.

The death penalty threatens to bring to waste all efforts to keep him alive.

Citing his experience and his fellow Abadilla convicts, Lumanog said they were victims of injustice.

He insisted that he, Cesar Fortuna, Joel de Jesus, Rameses de Jesus and Augusto Santos were tortured into confessing to Abadilla's killing.

They were sentenced to die three years ago by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court. However, their case is under automatic review by the Supreme Court.

The human rights case against the police officers accused of torturing the so-called Abadilla 5 has already been filed, according to Lumanog.

"We are given new hope in the Supreme Court's review and the reopening of the human rights case," he said, adding that they were looking forward to living normal lives soon.

2 Isafp officers rapped over 10 fake agents

THE COMMANDING officer of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) has filed graft charges against two former officials.

Commodore Tirso Danga, lodged the charges before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office against Air Force Lt. Col. Nestor Saludo and Army Capt. Marlon Mendoza, both formerly with the Military Intelligence Group 23.

Danga accused Saludo and Mendoza of giving benefits reserved for Isafp agents to 10 persons not members of the service.

Among the charges are the violation of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, violation of Presidential Decree 1866 for issuing authority to carry firearms and ammunitions and for falsely pretending to posses authority to issue official documents.

In his complaint, Danga said Saludo and Mendoza falsely and illegally made it appear that the 10 individuals were appointed to the official plantilla positions of the ISAFP with a monthly allowance of P3,000 each.

They also reportedly issued firearms, ammunition and identification cards to the 10 persons. *Tina Santos*

Chinoys seek China's help vs trafficking

By Christian V. Esguerra

MEMBERS of the Chinese-Filipino community yesterday urged Chinese authorities to join the government's crackdown against illegal drugs.

In a manifesto signed by 26 groups, the Chinese-Filipino Community Peace and Order Coordination Council asked the Chinese government to prevent drug traffickers from coming to the Philippines.

The groups noted that most of the suspects arrested and identified as operators of drug laboratories in the country were Chinese.

"We believe the Chinese government will not tolerate the involvement of its nationals in the manufacturing and trading of illegal drugs in the Philippines," they wrote.

Local authorities have dismantled at least 16 shabu laboratories and arrested dozens of suspects since January this year.

The Chinese-Filipinos told the Chinese government that the illicit activities of its nationals were giving the Philippine community a bad image.

Aventajado's charge vs Wee unfair

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

ROBERT Aventajado, former President Erap's favorite adviser, is making himself look good in his book, "140 Days of Terror: In the Clutches of the Abu Sayyaf," at the expense of his fellow negotiators in the Sipadan hostage crisis in 2000.

Aventajado, for example, says that then Libyan Ambassador to the Philippines Abdurazak Rajab Azzarouq and Mohammad Ismail skimmed off part of the $25-million ransom money for the European hostages.

Another person Aventajado accuses of taking a cut from the ransom payment is Zamboanga City multimillionaire Lepeng Wee. He says that Wee spent P1 million for the "board and lodging" of the Malaysian hostages and demanded a P2-million reimbursement.

* * *

Curiously, Aventajado launched his book a few days after the capture of Abu Sayyaf leader Ghalib Andang, alias Commander Robot, by military intelligence agents in Sulu.

Aventajado dealt with Commander Robot for the release of the European hostages, while Wee worked on the release of the Malaysian kidnap victims.

Robot is undergoing tactical interrogation by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) on his hospital bed.

* * *

Wait till the s**t hits the fan. Some of the dirt will surely splatter on Aventajado's face.

Whether Wee received a P2-million reimbursement for spending P1 million on the Malaysians, Aventajado should have kept quiet.

Why? Because his cut is reportedly much, much more.

* * *

Methinks that part of the ransom payment may have found its way to Malacañang at the time.

Former President Erap was not beyond such a sleazy, stinking money deal. *Kung yung jueteng na sugal-lupa pinatulan ni Erap...*

And since Erap was not an honest leader, what could you expect from his No. 1 subaltern?

* * *

Lepeng Wee wanted very much to buy the Mimosa resort inside Clark and asked Erap (they were still very close friends then) if he could be given the privilege.

After a couple of weeks, Wee backed out of the deal.

Why? Erap and his cohorts wanted 60 percent ownership of the Mimosa resort while Wee would only own 40 percent. The money to buy the resort would all be put up by the Zamboanga City businessman.

"Matakaw man ang ating Presidente, Mon," Wee told me.

* * *

Poor Wee. He didn't know what hit him when his name appeared in the banner headline of the INQUIRER Friday. Aventajado dragged his name into the mud.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Wee but was only able to talk to Tony Angeles, his lawyer. A fax copy of Aventajado's accusation against Wee in his book was sent to the businessman.

But instead of defending his client, the provincial lawyer buried Wee deeper in the mud when he told the INQUIRER his client was not making any comment.

* * *

Geez, kapulpol man nga abogado ni! Angeles could have denied Aventajado's statement outright.

Why am I saying this? Because Wee never benefited from the ransom payment. I should know. I was in constant touch with Lepeng all that time.

He was advanced payment for "board and lodging" of the Malaysian hostages. Like most Filipino-Chinese who have friends in high places, Wee wanted his friend Erap to pat him on the back for his efforts. He got none.

* * *

To Lepeng Wee, P1 million is loose change. Why would he be so penny ante as to claim an excess of P1 million in reimbursement?

The truth is Wee never counted the money that he spent on the Malaysians. He never even told me, his close friend, how much money was spent on the Malaysians.

"Money is no object as long as the Malaysians are freed and our President sees that I'm working," the Chavacano Chinoy told me in halting Tagalog. In short, he was "sipsip" to Erap.

For being *sipsip* (subservient) to his former Master, Lepeng now gets st. Poor guy.**

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

Bilibid warden sacked

BuCor chief cites case of jail visitor detained for 8 months

By Margaux Ortiz

A MAN without a debt to society has been found living on the wrong side of prison bars for eight months and has left Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) chief Dionisio Santiago fuming.

Santiago has ordered the relief of National Bilibid Prisons (NBP) Supt. Francisco Abunales, after he learned that truck driver Redolito "Rey" Yap, had been locked up at the facility's maximum security compound since April.

According to BuCor spokesperson and public information office chief Supt. Ven Jo Tesoro, Santiago on Thursday night called from abroad inquiring about the release of Yap, 39, a delivery truck driver and resident of Barangay Mapang, Rizal, Zamboanga del Norte.

Santiago is in Hong Kong for a conference.

ABUNALES

Tesoro said Yap was "turned over" to his lawyer and cousin at around 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, after BuCor officials confirmed that he had been wrongfully imprisoned since April.

"(Santiago) was fuming mad because of leniency on the part of Supt. Abunales," Tesoro told the INQUIRER in an interview. "He asked how a visitor could have overstayed inside the maximum security compound for a long time."

Santiago also gave instructions that Abunales' relief must take place immediately, Tesoro said. "Supt. Abunales' failure to properly account for his prisoners had an adverse effect on his career."

The INQUIRER tried to reach Abunales, but he was not available for comment.

Tesoro said they immediately checked out Yap's presence in jail as soon as they received the information two months ago. But he stressed that the maximum security compound has over 10,000 inmates, which made it hard for them to trace and verify Yap's presence.

Tesoro said Yap had come all the way from Zamboanga last April to visit his inmate friend Renato Villamor.

But Villamor had begged Yap to stay with him for one more day, convincing him to testify against the prisoner's complainant.

"The day however turned into weeks, then months," Tesoro said, adding that Yap was fearful that if he told BuCor officials about his situation, the other inmates would "do him harm."

Tesoro said that after initial investigation, they found out that Yap did not commit any criminal offense and was only "guilty of staying behind."

"The most we could punish him with is to ban him from visiting NBP in the future," Tesoro said.

Tesoro said Yap was visibly pale when he was released from prison, although he was later found to be physically fit.

This was confirmed by Yap's lawyer, Artemio Mata.

GAILY ADORNED
Gender activists, artists, health advocates and members of the International Gay and Lesbian Association are gathering at the Bayview Hotel in Manila for the 22nd World Conference on Gay and Lesbian Rights. Here, gay men and lesbians line up to have their bodies adorned with images of butterflies to mark the event.
JOAN BONDOC

After buses, NCRPO trains guns on jeeps

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

HERE come the jeep detectives.

In line with the program earlier launched by his predecessor, Director Ricardo De Leon of the National Capital Region Police Office has ordered the random deployment of plainclothes policemen on passenger jeepneys starting today.

This was in answer to the clamor of jeepney operators who, in a meeting on Thursday, had asked the NCRPO for assistance to stem the rise of robberies on passenger vehicles. Lawmen on beat patrols would also monitor activities on passing jeepneys, De Leon told the INQUIRER.

He also said that passengers who would be seen standing on a jeepney's running board would be asked to get off and inspected.

De Leon revealed that it is common for jeepney robbers to block the vehicle's entrance by clinging on the rails and standing on the running board outside, while their cohorts rob the passengers inside.

Former NCRPO director and now Philippine Center on Transnational Crime executive director Reynaldo Velasco launched the bus detectives program several months ago to thwart highway robbery incidents. The program has received the support and praise of bus operators and drivers.

Metro LGUs firm up anti-terror measures

NATIONAL Security Adviser Roilo Golez yesterday held a security briefing where he informed members of the Metro Manila Council of the counter-terrorism measures to be undertaken by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and local government units.

During a meeting with MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, representatives of Metro Manila mayors, their peacekeeping officers and chiefs of police, Golez stressed that drills, training and seminars to identify and protect possible targets should be conducted in each local government unit.

In a bid to counter terrorism in the metropolis during the holidays, Golez yesterday presented a three-tiered defense plan to be implemented in the metropolis. This would involve intelligence work, the "hardening" or strengthening of possible targets, and consequence management in case of attacks.

"The mayors shall be designated as crisis managers in such incidents," Golez said.

Golez also said that he has sent a security team to Jakarta, Indonesia to learn how the country recovered in the aftermath of the Mariott Hotel bombing earlier this year.

"Then we would try to apply the counter-terrorism measures we have learned from them here," he said.

"These measures will hopefully heighten awareness and ensure our vigilance against terrorist acts, especially during the holidays," Fernando said. *Margaux Ortiz*

PDEA official says he did not shoot NBI man

By Leila Salaverria

A RANKING official of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency has come forward to clear his name, denying that he was among those accused of shooting an agent of the National Bureau of Investigation last week.

Senior Supt. Orlando Mabutas of the PDEA has also denied that he had been charged for shooting NBI Special Investigator Marvin Matamis.

In a letter sent to the INQUIRER, Mabutas said that he is not a member of the Special Enforcement Service (SES) because he is the regional director of the PDEA's Metro Manila Regional Office.

He added that his co-accused—SES members P03 Norman Jesus Platon and P03 Sherwin Bulan—were not under him. He said he had not known of them until their names were published in the papers.

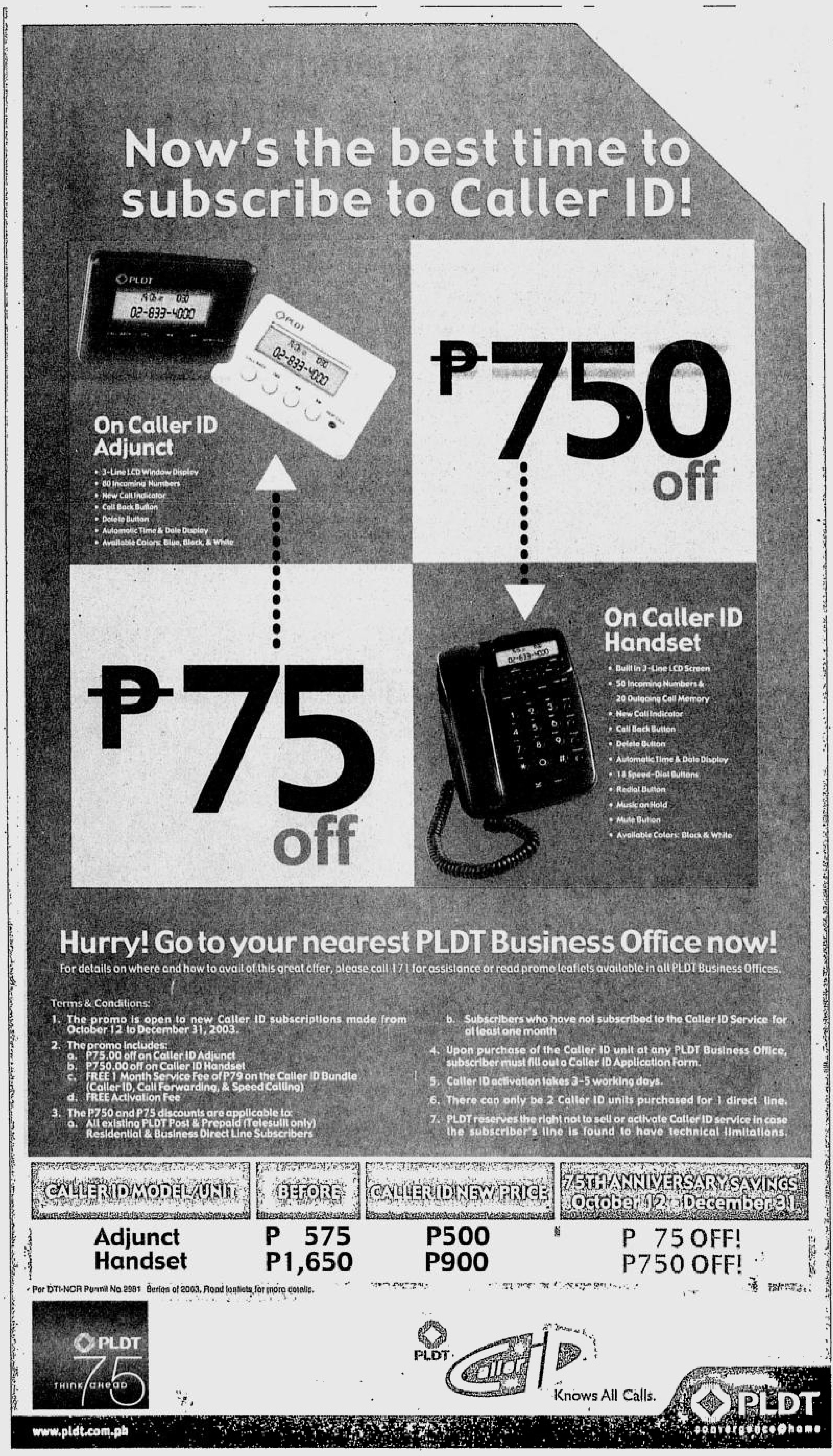
Mabutas also said that he does not move around with bodyguards and maintains a good standing in society and in the PNP.

But NBI-National Capital Region Director Atty. Edmund Arugay yesterday said that Mabutas was among the five men, including two John Does, charged with frustrated homicide and theft before the Department of Justice (not before the Marikina Prosecutor's Office as earlier reported) for shooting Matamis and taking his firearm, badge and wallet on Dec. 5.

Arugay said that the PDEA official was included in the charges because Matamis himself identified Mabutas, Platon and Bulan as the men who shot him.

Sources privy to the case, said that the NBI is set to request the Philippine National Police for test slugs from the firearms of the three PDEA agents, so that the bureau could compare them to the slugs found in Barangay San Roque, Marikina, where Matamis was shot.

Platon and Bulan surrendered to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group after the shooting incident. They said they were forced to shoot the NBI agent when he tried to grab their firearms.



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BASKETBALL: NBA-Nets vs Magic; 8:30 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports; Lakers vs Mavericks; 11:30 a.m. (r-9:30 p.m.)—Slumping Atlantic Division rivals New Jersey and Orlando slug it out in Florida while it's a clash of the titans as LA battles Dallas.

NBA Greatest Games-Blazers vs Mavs, Game 2, 1985 Western First Round; 12 noon; Solar Sports—Portland and Dallas collide in this playoff encounter nearly two decades ago.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

RP still trails M'laysia by 2 golds

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—The Philippines hit past the 40-gold medal mark Friday as wrestlers Marcus Valda and Cris Villanueva accounted for two of six victories that failed to overhaul Malaysia as fourth place overall in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

Two Bicolanos, Allan Ballester and Eusebio Quinones, scored in the final event of athletics and cycling, respectively.

Movie actor Richard Gomez finally landed a gold in fencing and the future of taekwondo, 15-year-old Mary Antoinette Rivero, gave her sport a fifth gold to round out the latest cast of Filipino stars on the penultimate day of this 11-nation sportsfest that will be held in Manila two years from now.

With 41 golds, the Filipinos remained two victories behind the Malaysians with more events going on at press time.

Meanwhile, Vietnam surged 50 golds ahead of Thailand with 134 wins. Indonesia was a far third with 51.

Wrestling now has three golds after Valda nailed his second victory in the freestyle open division at the expense of Le Thanh Tieng of Vietnam while Villanueva scored in the under 51-kg class by beating Onamong Chari of Thailand.

Ballester, a 29-year-old father of three from Sorsogon City, succeeded Roy Vence as marathon champion to give athletics its eighth gold overall while Quinones, a Navy seaman first class from Basud, Camarines Norte, wheeled into prominence in the 35-km cross country in cycling.

Gomez shed tears of joy as he crashed the champion's circle in his last SEAG by teaming up with Avelino Victorino and Wilfredo Viscayno in the men's epee team that downed Thailand in the finals, 45-32.

A popular figure in previous Filipino campaigns, Gomez said he would now concentrate on trap shooting which does not require a time-consuming regimen than fencing.

Rivero, a junior at St. Paul's Pasig, proved too much for Singapore's Chen Peiqi in the featherweight division as the Filipino jins surpassed by two golds their total output in Malaysia.

Ballester pulled away from Vietnam's Nguyen Chi Dong in the final 5 km and soloed it home in two hours 21 minutes and 03 seconds. Vence, the winner in Malaysia in 2001, was far from his old form and checked in fifth in the 11-man

RP/ A26

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Vietnam	138	85	82	305
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Indonesia	52	60	89	201
Malaysia	43	40	51	134
Philippines	41	49	67	157
Singapore	28	30	45	103
Myanmar	13	36	43	92
Laos	1	5	11	17
Cambodia	1	5	11	17
Brunei	1	1	7	9
East Timor	0	0	0	0

Cagebelles go for silver

HO CHI MINH—The Philippine women's basketball team can still salvage the silver medal in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here and all they have to do is beat the Singaporeans.

The Filipinas have a 3-win, 1-loss record, the same card of the Singaporeans.

The two sides collide at 9 a.m. (10 a.m. in Manila).

Based on their past games, however, the Singaporeans should be tough nut to crack.

Singapore whipped Thailand, 70-56, while the Filipinas could only tally an 84-82 victo-

CAGEBELLES/ A26

EDWIN BACASMAS

GARY David (left) and Celino Cruz block a pass by the Indonesian point guard during the tightly fought match Thursday in Ho Chi Minh. The RP five won to move within a win of clinching the basketball gold.

Rivero makes it 5 for taekwondo

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—Rookie Mary Antoinette Rivero bucked an attack of cramps to beat Singapore's Chen Peioi, 2-0, and capture the women's taekwondo featherweight title in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games.

"*Medyo nagka*-cramps *ako sa* second round *pero lumaban pa rin ako nang husto* (I had cramps during the second round but I still fought hard)," said the 15-year-old high school junior from St. Paul's Pasig.

The victory of the 5-foot-7 Rivero gave the Philippines a final medal tally of 5 golds, 3 silvers and 6 bronzes as it barely missed regaining the overall championship in the sport.

Vietnam, which dislodged the Philippines in the 1999 Brunei SEAG, reigned supreme anew with its 5-4-4 output at the Phu Tho Indoor Stadium.

"This gold medal is for Gor, my country and my family.

Maraming salamat sa mga sumuporta sa akin at sa buong team (My thanks to all those who supported me and the team)," said Rivero, silver medalist in the Korea Open early this year.

Heavyweight Dindo Simpao bowed to 6-foot-7 Athens Olympic qualifier Van Hung of Vietnam by RSC (Referee Stopped Contest) in the first round at the close of competition.

Finweight Eva Marie Ditan matched her bronze medal in the 1999 Brunei SEAG following a 6-0 loss to three-time champion Nguyen Thi Hyen Dieu of Vietnam.

Olympic qualifier Tshomlee Go was edged by defending champion Ussadate Sutthibunkarn of Thailand, 14-12, for the flyweight title.

"I'm satisfied with my wards' performance. They gave their best for the country," said national coach Manolo Gabriel.

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Viet stalls Torre; RP team ahead

TORRE: Half a point adrift

EDWIN BACASMAS

ANTONIO

Standings after Round 7

6.0—GM Adianto (Indonesia); **5.5**—GM Torre (RP), IM Paragua (RP), IM Megaranto (Indonesia); **4.5**—GM Antonio (RP), GM Dao (Vietnam), IM Pham (Vietnam), Wong Zi Jing (Malaysia); **4.0**—GM Villamayor (RP), IM Dableo (RP), GM Wu (Singapore), IM Mas (Malaysia), Lim Yee (Malaysia), Rudin (Indonesia), Banjuab (Thailand), Bui Vinh (Vietnam), IM Myo Naing (Myanmar), Zaw Win Lay (Myanmar)

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—Grandmaster Eugene Torre got stalled but the Philippines boosted its chances for the team gold after Round 7 of men's standard chess in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

Torre missed the winning line and settled for a draw against Vietnam IM Pham Minh Hoang to drop to second place behind Indon GM Utut Adianto, who had 6.0 points, in individual play.

"I could have won with the Rb7 move," said the 52-year-old Torre after the post-game analysis. He improved to 5.5 points.

Two other Filipinos—IM Mark Paragua and GM Joey Antonio—gained ground, even as GM Bong Villamayor and IM Ronald Dableo stayed in contention, pushing the Philippines ahead of Indonesia and Vietnam in team competition.

The 19-year-old Paragua, the rapid individual winner, beat Malaysian IM Mas Hafizulhimi, to climb to 5 points while Antonio improved to 4.5 following a victory over Indon IM Liu Dede.

Villamayor and Dableo led the 4-pointers after drawing their matches against Banjuab Jiravorasuk and Singaporean GM Wu Shao Bin, respectively.

Vietnam paces the team event with 21 points while the Philippines and Indonesia are tied for second at 16.5.

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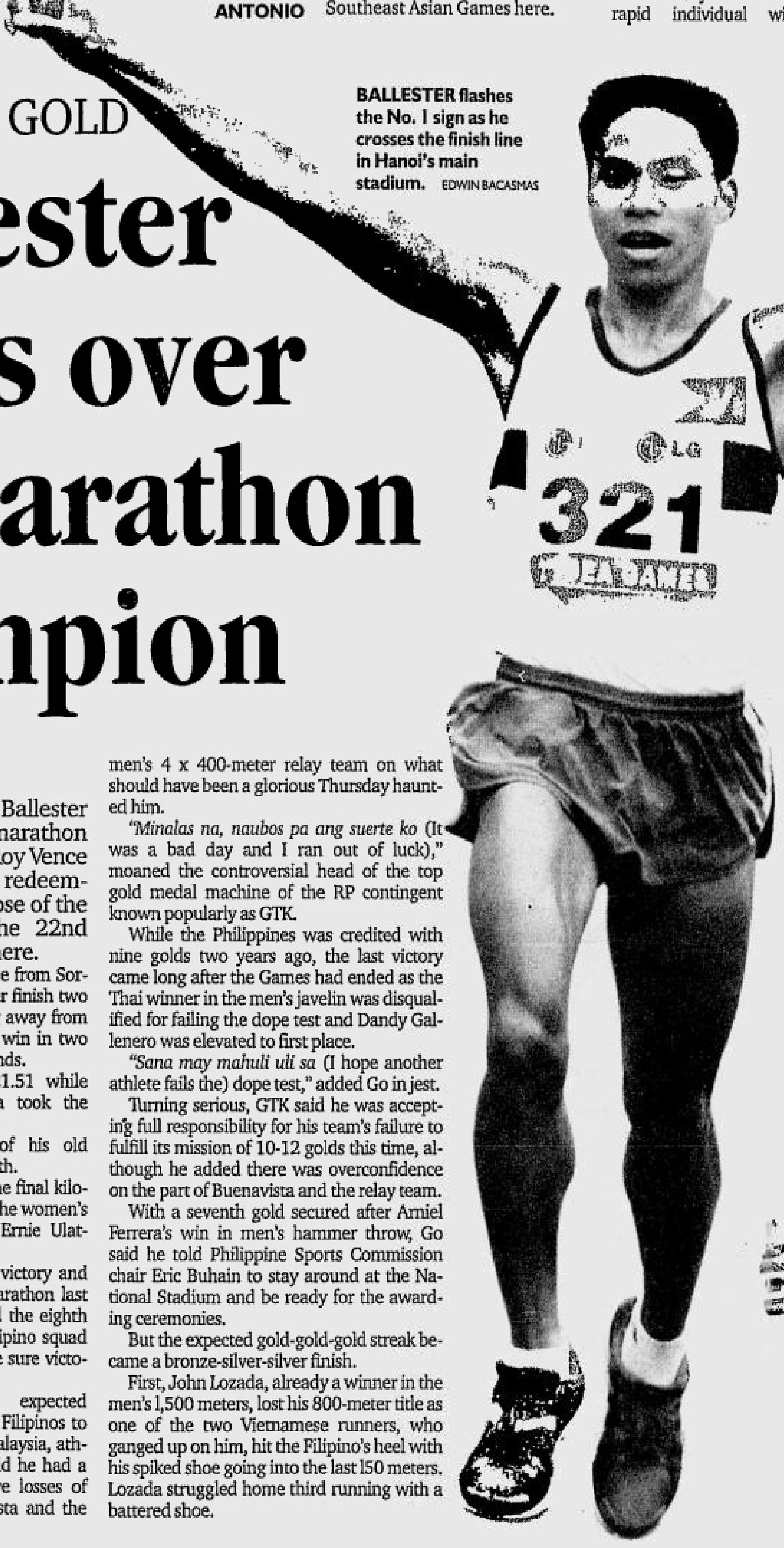
8TH TRACK GOLD

Ballester takes over as marathon champion



BALLESTER flashes the No. 1 sign as he crosses the finish line in Hanoi's main stadium. EDWIN BACASMAS

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Allan Ballester took over as marathon champion from Roy Vence Friday to give athletics a redeeming final victory at the close of the centerpiece event of the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

The 29-year-old father of three from Sorsogon City improved on his silver finish two years ago in Malaysia by pulling away from Vietnam's Nguyen Chi Dong to win in two hours 21 minutes and three seconds.

Nguyen was second in 2:21.51 while Thailand's Boonchoo Jandacha took the bronze in 2:23.35.

Vence, 37, showed none of his old marathon fire and came home fifth.

Flordeliza Cachero faded in the final kilometer and missed the bronze in the women's marathon won by Indonesia's Ernie Ulatingsih in 2:52.28.

It was the first international victory and the second since the Manila Marathon last June for Ballester, who clinched the eighth gold for the highly regarded Filipino squad that blew what looked like three sure victories Thursday.

Although elated by the expected marathon win that allowed the Filipinos to match their golden harvest in Malaysia, athletics president Go Teng Kok said he had a sleepless night as the successive losses of John Lozada, Eduardo Buenavista and the men's 4 x 400-meter relay team on what should have been a glorious Thursday haunted him.

"Minalas na, naubos pa ang suerte ko (It was a bad day and I ran out of luck)," moaned the controversial head of the top gold medal machine of the RP contingent known popularly as GTK.

While the Philippines was credited with nine golds two years ago, the last victory came long after the Games had ended as the Thai winner in the men's javelin was disqualified for failing the dope test and Dandy Gallenero was elevated to first place.

"Sana may mahuli uli sa (I hope another athlete fails the) dope test," added Go in jest.

Turning serious, GTK said he was accepting full responsibility for his team's failure to fulfill its mission of 10-12 golds this time, although he added there was overconfidence on the part of Buenavista and the relay team.

With a seventh gold secured after Arniel Ferrera's win in men's hammer throw, Go said he told Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain to stay around at the National Stadium and be ready for the awarding ceremonies.

But the expected gold-gold-gold streak became a bronze-silver-silver finish.

First, John Lozada, already a winner in the men's 1,500 meters, lost his 800-meter title as one of the two Vietnamese runners, who ganged up on him, hit the Filipino's heel with his spiked shoe going into the last 150 meters. Lozada struggled home third running with a battered shoe.

Filipinos mired in 5th with 41 golds

From page A250

field in 2:29.03.

The eighth gold matched the country's athletics total two years ago although association president Go Teng Kok, who had predicted 10-12 victories this time, continued to rue the unexpected losses of defending champions John Lozada (800 meters) , Eduardo Buenavista (5,000m) and the highly regarded 4 x 400 relay team Thursday.

With the country's top pro riders ending up with just two silvers, mountain biker Quinones pulled through in the 25-km cross country event with Frederick Feliciano placing third to match an earlier bronze by Maritess Bitbit in the women's division.

The men's basketball team shoots for the gold tomorrow against Malaysia in Ho Chi Minh where the Filipinos are also in gold contention in traditional chess after seven rounds.

The pawnpushers led in the team race while grandmaster Eugene Torre was overtaken by Indonesia's Utut Adianto for first.

Pencak silat groped for the gold and settled for three of the day's eight silvers—Christopher Yabut (under 55 kg), Emmanuel Baesa (under 65) and Larry Sarreal (under 90). Wrestling also produced two runners-up in Violeto Agustin in the freestyle under 48 kg and Jimmy Angana in the under 60 class.

Rivero's victory actually prevented a gold shutout for taekwondo as Dindo Simpao settled for the silver in the men's heavyweight division and women's finweight Eva Marie Ditan had to content herself with the bronze. Another rated entry, Tshomlee Go, was eliminated by Thailand's U Sutthikunkarn in his first match in the men's flyweight division.

Another taekwondo silver was contributed by Alexander Briones in the welterweight class late Thursday.

Also claiming a silver Thursday evening was Rey Grandea in the cadre 47/1 carom singles with teammate Emilio Villariza taking the bronze earlier in the same event.

The concluding events in fencing, fin swimming, shooting, sepak takraw, traditional boat racing and wushu are scheduled Saturday before the closing ceremony in the evening at the National Stadium.

THE RP team pips the Malaysian crew for the bronze medal in the 12-man traditional boat race in Hanoi's West Lake. AFP

Cagers seeking 5-game sweep

HO CHI MINH—Nothing less than a sweep.

Even with the basketball title virtually in the bag, RP-Cebuana Lhuillier intends to finish with a flourish against Malaysia at 11 a.m. (12 noon in Manila) Saturday in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

The Filipinos won their first four games and, following the Malaysians' 79-74 loss to the Thais Saturday, are solid favorites to retain the crown they've held since 1991.

The Filipinos can afford to lose by 20 points and still emerge champions via the tie-break. But for coach Aric del Rosario, that would be unacceptable.

Alarmed by his wards' unimpressive win over the Indons, 75-70, Thursday night, Del Rosario cancelled a pre-agreed free day.

"We can't afford to relax," said the 63-year-old Del Rosario, who ordered practice at 4 p.m. Afterwards, Del Rosario and assistant coaches Boyzie Zamar and Dong Vergeire went to review the tape of the Thailand-Malaysia game.

They studied the individual movements and the plays of the Malaysians, who are being handled by American Felton Sealey.

"Gusto naming matapos nang maganda (We want to finish it well)," Vergeire said.

"To do that, we need to raise their (players) level of intensity."

Roy Luarca

Cagebelles go . . .

From page A25

ry over the Thais.

Malaysia, sure to retain its crown with its 4-0 record, battles Thailand in the mainer of women's play at 1 p.m.

Even if the cohesive Malaysians lose their last game, they would still finish on top as they have beaten both the Singaporeans (83-65) and the Filipinas (65-54).

Coach Bai Cristobal's charges are bidding to improve on their bronze medal finish in the 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEAG.

Basketball Association of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim, EVP Christian Tan and treasurer Tony Fabico are in town to provide moral support to the Filipinas and the RP-Cebuana Lhuillier team.

Roy Luarca

Formula for 2005

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THIS is not new anymore but I'll say it again anyway for purposes of emphasis. The ongoing Southeast Asian Games will never truly reflect the true sports champion of the region. That has been virtually the case since the Games' inception 44 years ago. It's been that long.

Let me explain.

Supposedly, the nations of Southeast Asia (there are 11 now, including East Timor) battle each other once in two years for sports supremacy in the region. But generally, what has been happening of late is that the host country will most likely win the overall crown. It's become a cycle—a vicious one, if I may say so.

Indonesia, because of its huge population and the government's robust support for sports, has been a perennial champion like Thailand. According to Loren Manguiat, my own walking sports encyclopedia, Indonesia and Thailand each won nine of the last 21 editions of the Games. Burma won twice in 1961 and 1965 and Malaysia had its lone win when it hosted it in 2001.

I've been covering the SEA Games since the Philippines joined the Games in 1977. Gosh, it's been that long. This year though, some events had unfortunately bumped off my trip to Hanoi. No regrets. Some choices have to be made at the expense of others.

In 1981, when we hosted the Games in Manila, I even helped put out the Games' daily newsletter to chronicle the events/results of the day. That was a hell of a time; the staff and I would always hit the sack at 4 a.m. each day for 10 straight days. When one is young, the energy is boundless. The hours of the day are not enough to make you stop working—when there's work to do, that is. And that includes the lifting of weights—of any kind—the bottle being the favorite among them. Relaxing after work is the key to good life.

I'd say the Philippines exhibited a superb sporting gesture in 1981 when it did not exploit its home court advantage to win the overall crown. That year, we could only place third behind champion Indonesia and Thailand when we could have easily won the overall crown had we chose to play it greedily, the way most host countries of the event usually do it.

And how would they show their greed?

Simple. The host country will choose disciplines that will give them the biggest chances to win the golds. That's because unlike the Olympics or Asian Games, the SEA Games rules allow that. Thus in Vietnam, golf and bowling, disciplines the Vietnamese do not much indulge in and therefore are games not gold-rich for them, have been struck out. That was unfortunate for us because we are strong both in golf and bowling.

What's more, Vietnam, as host, had the latitude to insert in events that their neighbors do not play, like fin swimming, a gold mine but which is virtually Greek to most SEA Games participants.

In just two days of action, Vietnam, fourth overall in 2001 when Malaysia won its first crown while hosting the event in Kuala Lumpur, swept into the lead and, with barely a day left in the Games, appeared a sure winner with its haul of 82 golds. Thailand was a far second with 60 golds, with Indonesia third at 34, Malaysia fourth at 30 and the Philippines fifth at 26.

We will be lucky if we end up fourth overall as we are still short of 14 golds to our target of 40 golds.

When we host the Games anew in 2005, I suggest that we include *sipa*, *patintero* and *tumbang preso* in the calendar. That way, we might finally win our first overall crown after missing the 1991 title by a single gold to Indonesia. We failed to include *bunong-braso* that's why.

To really ensure our victory in 2005, I have an idea borne out of Vietnam's fin swimming event, whatever that is. And it's this: In 2005, let's include *langoy aso*. The opposition can't complain because we are not breaking a Games rule. But if they insist, let them be.

They'd end up anyways barking up the wrong tree.

That's because The Philippines joined the Games in 1977; it hosted the event in 1981 and 1991 and will do it again in 2005.

MARIA Estela Bonifacio sheds tears of joy after being proclaimed winner of the women's middleweight final in taekwondo in Ho Chi Minh's Phu Tho Stadium. She beat Malaysia's Che Chew Chan, 5-3. Helping her take her vest off is compatriot Veronica Domingo, gold medalist in the lightweight class. EDWIN BACASMAS

Brave RP jin gets his revenge

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—Every time Dax Alberto Morfe sees the 4-inch scar below his right knee and feels the metal plate inside, his adrenalin rises.

He remembers. It was 2001, during the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games taekwondo competitions, and he was fighting Vietnamese Phan Tan Dat in the middleweight division.

Dat unleashed a vicious kick on Morfe's leg and sent a stab of pain into the Filipino's brain.

Morfe's shin was broken and the leg had to be put in a plaster cast on the flight home. Then it had to be operated on, and Morfe was on a crutch for four months.

When he returned to competition, he used the incident to serve as an inspiration. He knew that he'd cross paths again with Dat.

That's why, when they faced each other in the final Thursday night, the 5-foot-11 Morfe wanted revenge.

The Vietnamese proved a tough nut to crack though and led 5-4 as time ran out. Little did Dat know that he'd be deducted two points from the four warnings (each costs half a point) he got for stepping out of the line.

As soon as the bout ended, Morfe jumped in glee for he knew about the warnings' implications.

Exasperated, Dat slammed his headgear on the floor. He also refused Morfe's handshake.

"*Talagang ganun siya. Hindi rin niya ako kinamayan sa* dope test (It's so typical of him. He also refused my handshake during the dope test)," said the finance graduate from De La Salle University.

After the fight, you couldn't see the anger in Morfe's eyes anymore.

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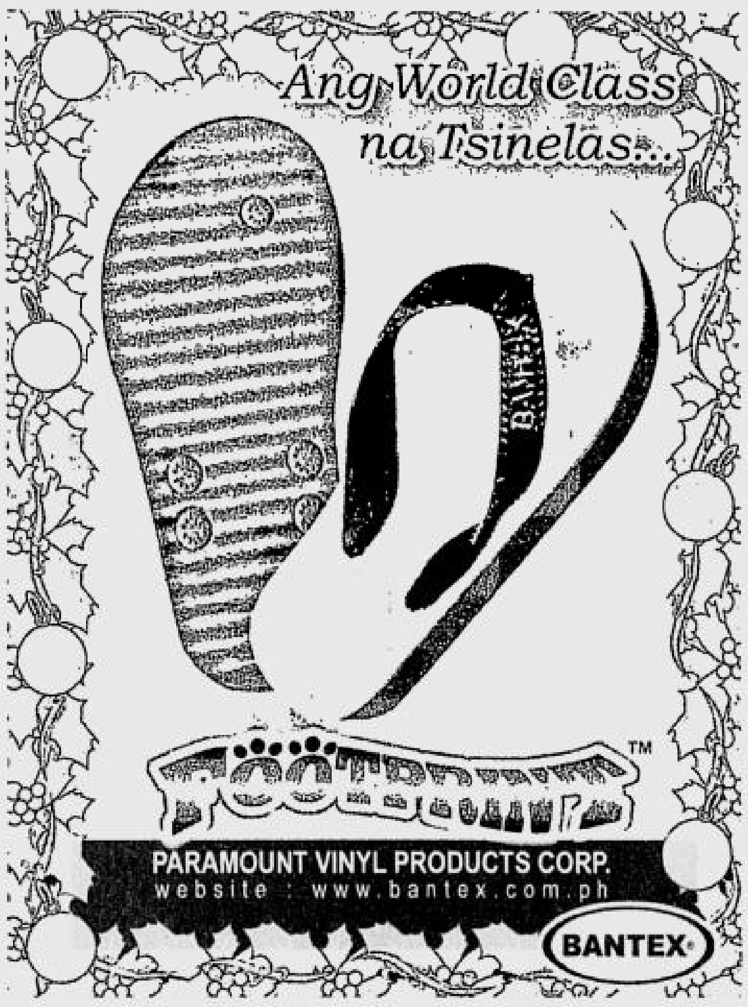

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SPORTSWATCH

Perez rules Ultron Rallycross

ALEX Perez of the DMF Team ruled the penultimate round of the Ultron Rallycross Series last Saturday to keep his overall lead in the national driver's championship. Perez posted his winning time of 1 minute, 19.01 seconds in the second heat of the RP 14 category. Second place went to Jay Navarro, who clocked 1:20.82 in the RP 12 class. Ron Atengco's time of 1:22.45, also in the RP 14 class, placed him in third overall. Jay Navarro wound up second in the NRC 19/National Driver's championship class with a time of 1:21.92. He was followed by Ivan Isada of Team Ultron, Vip Isada of Team Blaze and Ron Atengco. Ferman Lao ruled the RP 11 category with a time of 1:30.59, with Alfred Racho second in 1:33.61. Peréz also took top honors in the RP 14 class, followed by Kenneth Dominado, Ivan Isada and Art Guevara. Paolo Arespacochaga of Team DMF topped the Arrive and Drive category with a time of 1:06.28, followed by David Feliciano and Mon Rayos. The 2003 Ultron National Rallycros Series is sponsored by Petron Ultron, Blaze and Diesel Max and organized by Activity Asia Association in cooperation with Roadwise Motoring School, Automobile Association of the Philippines and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Alonzo leads Pioneer Badminton bid

PIONEER Badminton opens its championship bid against three other battle-grizzled teams when the Pioneer Badminton Christmas tournament fires off today in Mandaluyong City. Skippered by Dea Alonzo, Pioneer Badminton faces a tough challenge against the best shuttlecock artists from Team Aqua, Whistlestop and Pacific Internet, which ruled the recently concluded Epson Cup, also held at the Pioneer badminton courts. A total of 184 badminton enthusiasts were grouped into four teams. Action starts at 3 p.m. in the event sponsored by Pacific Internet, Whistlestop, Epson, Magic 89.9, Aqua Blue, Wilson and Yehey.com. Pioneer Badminton's Edmin Tarriela said the two-day competition culminates with a Christmas party-awards ceremony tomorrow at Whistlestop Shangri-la. Spearheaded by team captain Gerard Milan, Pacific Internet, which captured two straight titles this year, will use its vast championship experience against the rest of the field. "But we will make sure that Pacific Internet will not walk away with the crown unchallenged," said Alonzo. Meanwhile, Pioneer Badminton is accepting new members. For inquiries, call 7460828 or 6385343.

Big guns vying in Blockbuster Derby

IT will be a fight to the finish among big-time cockers in today's 62-fight "Yearend Blockbuster 5-Cock Derby" at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Cockpit. Action starts at 4 p.m. Hosted by popular cocker Gerry Ramos, the event dangles a P1.5 million cash pot. The long list of participants include Rudy Salud, Vice Mayor Nestor Mercado, Lito Orillaza, Gov. Ito Yñares, Patrick Antonio, Sonny Lagon, Gov. Tony Kho of Masbate, newspaper publisher Butch Macasaet, Mayor Nene Aguilar, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Ucap president Raymond Velayo, Jet and Joel Fernando, Madlambayan Brothers, Louie Cua, Boy de Roca, among others. For inquiries, call 873-1040.

Roligon 5-cock final round today

MORE than 140 fights are on tap when the championship round of the "Apordabol Na, Incredibol Pa 5-Cock Derby" series, which began last Nov. 29, gets underway at 11 a.m. today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. A total of 273 entries are competing for the top prize of P2.25 million and an imported Nissan Serena for the fastest kill champion. Promoter of the event is sportsman Rolly Ligon, who staged eight big derbies this year. Meanwhile, also slated at RMC is the "BM 4-cock derby" on Dec. 16 (hosted by Bonjing Catajan and Monching Adriano), which offers a P300,000 cash pot. For inquiries, call 833-2275 and 833-1638.

Hatfield, Asi, 4 others in hunt for MVP

SIX cagers vie for the Most Valuable Player trophy when the Philippine Basketball Association holds the Leo Awards, its annual ceremonies honoring the best and brightest of the year, on Monday night at the Music Museum.

In the hunt are Rudy Hatfield, Jeffrey Cariaso and Rafi Reavis of Coca-Cola, Asi Taulava and Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text and Alaska forward Ali Peek, in one of the most wide-open races for the league's highest individual honor.

Hatfield, the leader in the statistical points race, Cariaso and Reavis led Coke to three finals appearances this season while the 6-9 Taulava and Alapag combined to give Talk 'N Text its first conference championship.

Peek automatically made it to the MVP candidates' list after winning best player of the conference honors in the mid-season Invitationals, which Alaska ruled.

Also to be given out in the awards rites named in honor of PBA founding commissioner Leo Prieto are spots in the Mythical and All-Defensive teams as well as the rookie of the year, most improved player and sportsmanship citations.

Three new awards have been included in the roll—Darling of the Media, Mr. Energy and the Gawad Emerson Coseteng plum, which will go to the person who made significant contributions to the growth of Asia's first professional cage league.

"This gathering will not only honor the best players of the season, but will also pay homage to the men who helped make the league what it is now," said Commissioner Nolia Eala.

The First Gentleman Sportsman of the Year award will also be given to the player who made a significant contribution during the league's outreach program. Aside from the trophy, the winner among the 12 candidates will also receive P100,000.

Sen. Robert Jaworski and former Sen. Nikki Coseteng, who will personally hand out the Gawad Coseteng award, head the guest list in the event that will be spiced up by special numbers and the presence of celebrity guests from the showbiz world.

Alapag, being an MVP candidate, has the inside track on the rookie award—where he will be challenged by Alaska's Mike Cortez and teammate Harvey Carey—as well as a point guard spot in the Mythical first and second teams.

The Most Improved citation is a toss-up among Shell's Anthony dela Cruz, San Miguel Beer's Joey Mente, Purefoods' Kerby Raymundo and Reavis, while the Sportsmanship award will be contested by Purefoods' Noy Castillo, SMB's Olsen Racela, TNT's Patrick Fran, Sta. Lucia's Gerald Francisco and Dela Cruz.

Aside from the MVP candidates, lined up for spots in the Mythical teams are Johnny Abarrientos and Ato Morano of Coke at point guard, Alaska's John Arigo, Red Bull's Willie Miller and Fran at off-guard, Alaska's Don Allado and SMB's Nick Belasco at forward and Sta. Lucia's Marlou Aquino and Coke's Edward Juinio at center.

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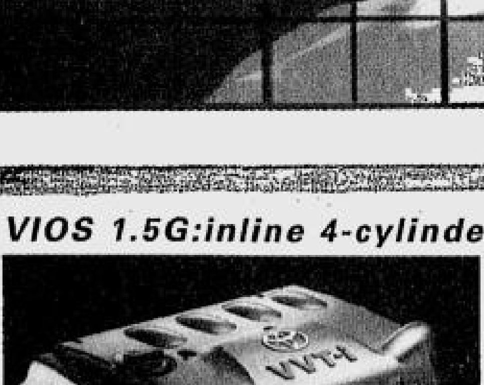

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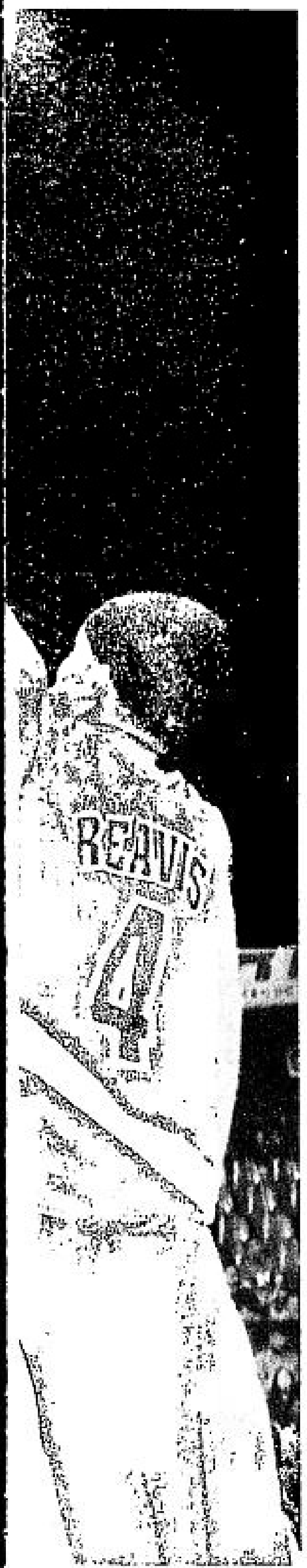


NY Ildefonso of San Miguel attempts a semi-hook off Reavis of Coca-Cola in the quarter of the game last . The game was still being ed at presstime.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Material Girl, Free Wind picked in PGC

WITH champion galloper Wind Blown now retired, the battle for local track supremacy has become wide open among 11 crack gallopers vying in tomorrow's PCSO Presidential Gold Cup race at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

The battle lines have been drawn, with six stakes veterans taking on five tough 3-year-olds in a classic matchup over 2,000 meters.

Defending champion Free Wind leads the protagonists for local racing's Holy Grail, although experts believe chances of a repeat victory are unlikely following his three consecutive setbacks in as many weeks.

Over the same period, a red-hot filly posted a string of victories and has steadily emerged as the new favorite in tomorrow's Cup race.

Material Maker, sired by Strong Material—one of local racing's all-time greats and Gold Cup winner in 1995—out of acccomplished gray galloper Rhummaker, impressed with recent wire-to-wire victories in big races, including last week's P1 million Wind Blown Classic Cup.

A record P2 million will go to the owner of this year's Presidential Gold Cup winner.

Likely to stand in Material Maker's way is 3-year-old standout West Bound, winner of the first two legs of this year's Triple Crown.

Also expected to take their shot at the big one are last year's Gold Cup runner-up Lyonnais, 2001 Triple Crown champion Silver Story, multiple stakes winning 3-year-olds Success Story and High Octane, as well as seasoned stakes campaigners Perfect Storm, Diktador, Mica's Magic and Red Star Rising.

Watch...Search for Tanduay The No. 1 Billiard Player Every Saturday on NBN 4, 8-9 PM
TANDUAY
THE NO. 1 RHUM

Liang challenges Gabica

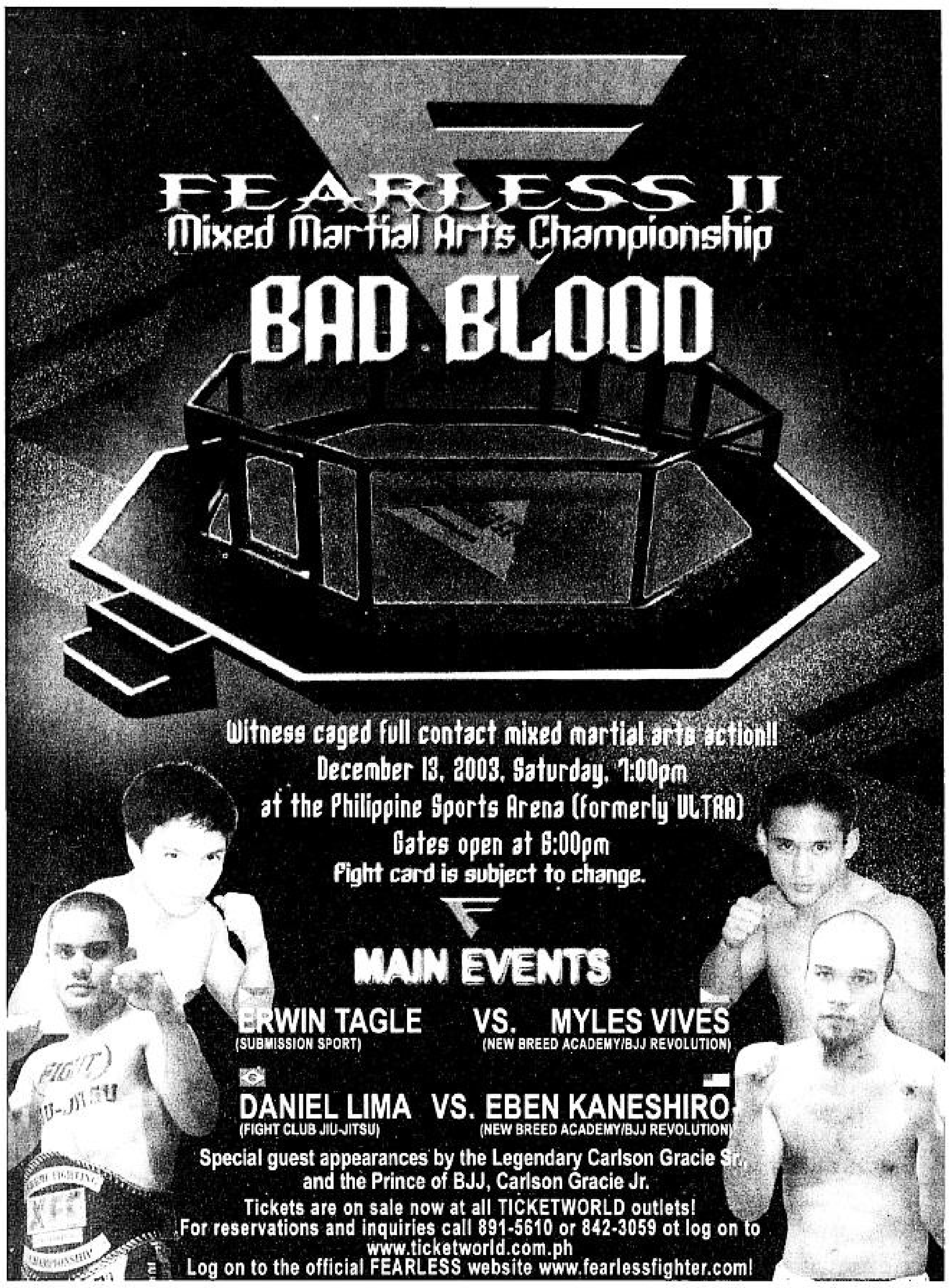
ANOTHER Kapampangan, Marvin Liang, will take on Antonio "Gaga" Gabica as the "Search for Tanduay the No. 1 Billiards Player" continues at the Robinsons Malls.

The 22-year-old Liang, a native of Guagua, is gunning for his second title after taking last year's Guagua 9-ball crown.

But he knows that stealing the limelight is a herculean task.

Gabica is a back-to-back Tokyo Open 9-ball champion.

The match, which has Tanduay, Robinsons Malls and Rommel's Billiards as sponsors, will be aired over NBN-4 tonight at 8, with hosts Danny Romero and Recah Trinidad.



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DANIEL LIMA (FIGHT CLUB JIU-JITSU) VS. EBEN KANESHIRO (NEW BREED ACADEMY/BJJ REVOLUTION)
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3. MR. SUAVE
4. THE GRUDGE
5. GOOD BOY!
6. RUGRATS GO WILD
7. CABIN FEVER
8. MYSTIC RIVER

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1. "CHRISTMAS FOR YOUR HEART"
2. SCARY MOVIE 3
3. COLD CREEK MANOR
4. OUT OF TIME
5. WRONG TURN
6. BABAE SA BREAKWATER
7. THE GRUDGE
8. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM CITY BACOOR
4173668

1. STAR RUNNER
2. SCARY MOVIE 3
3. CABIN FEVER
4. ELF
5. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
6. MR. SUAVE
7. ALIPIN
8. RUGRATS GO WILD

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1. OUT OF TIME
2. BABAE SA BREAKWATER
3. JEEPERS CREEPERS
4. SCARY MOVIE 3
5. COLD CREEK MANOR
6. INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2. THE GRUDGE
3. CABIN FEVER
4. ALIPIN

SM BICUTAN
7763855

1. THE GRUDGE
2. ALIPIN
3. MR. SUAVE
4. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM CITY MARILAO

1. MASTER & COMMANDER
2. MR. SUAVE
3. WRONG TURN
4. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM STA. MESA
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1. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2. ELF
3. MYSTIC RIVER
4. ALIPIN
5. CABIN FEVER
6. SCARY MOVIE 3
7. RUGRATS GO WILD
8. INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
9. GOOD BOY!
10. MR. SUAVE

SM SOUTHMALL
[illegible]

1. RUGRATS GO WILD
2. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
3. MYSTIC RIVER
4. GOOD BOY!
5. THE GRUDGE
6. INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
7. MR. SUAVE
8. CABIN FEVER
9. INTERNET QUEEN
10. ALIPIN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1. GOOD BOY!
2. RUGRATS GO WILD
3. ALIPIN
4. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5. CHAVIT SINGSON
6. THE GRUDGE
7. MYSTIC RIVER
8. CABIN FEVER
9. MR. SUAVE
10. SCARY MOVIE 3
11. LOONEY TUNES
12. INTERNET QUEEN

SM CITY DAVAO
2976956

1. OUT OF TIME
2. COLD CREEK MANOR
3. DARK BLUE
4. FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
5. SCARY MOVIE 3
6. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM CITY LUCENA
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1. LOONEY TUNES
2. DARK BLUE
3. COLD CREEK MANOR
4. WRONG TURN

SM MEGAMALL
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2. INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3. MYSTIC RIVER
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5. ELF
6. RUGRATS GO WILD
7. GOOD BOY!
8. STAR RUNNER
9. CABIN FEVER
10. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
11. INTERNET QUEEN
12. ALIPIN

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
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1. JEEPERS CREEPERS
2. INTERNET QUEEN
3. MR. SUAVE
4. ALIPIN

SM CITY ILOILO
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1. SEX SCANDAL
2. RESERVED
3. THE PHONE
4. FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
5. SCARY MOVIE 3
6. UPTOWN GIRLS
7. RESERVED
8. THE WISHER

SM CITY MANILA
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1. GOOD BOY!
2. ELF
3. CABIN FEVER
4. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5. RUGRATS GO WILD
6. MYSTIC RIVER
7. ALIPIN
8. INTERNET QUEEN
9. THE GRUDGE
10. SCARY MOVIE 3
11. STAR RUNNER
12. INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

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4. LOONEY TUNES

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2. LOONEY TUNES
3. RESERVED
4. RESERVED

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1 MYSTIC RIVER
5:00 FS/5:30 MF/8:20/10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:20 END

2 RUGRATS GO WILD
10:30 FS/10:55 MF/12:45/2:35/4:25/6:15/8:05/9:30 LFS/10:00 LMF/11:25 END

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1 OUT OF TIME 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:55 THX
4 MYSTIC RIVER 10:50, 1:35, 4:20, 7:05, 9:55
2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40
5 CABIN FEVER 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 RUGRATS GO WILD 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
6 GOOD BOY 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
7 INTERNET QUEEN 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
9 THE GRUDGE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
10 ELF 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

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1 MYSTIC RIVER - 11:20, 2:10, 4:55, 7:40, 10:00
2 ELF - 10:10, 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:00, 9:50
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 RUGRATS GO WILD - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 GOOD BOY - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
6 CABIN FEVER - 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

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2. RUGRATS GO WILD
3. INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4. GOOD BOY
5. CABIN FEVER
6. MYSTIC RIVER
7. ELF
8. JEEPERS CREEPERS

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1. RUGRATS GO WILD
2. MYSTIC RIVER
3. GOOD BOY
4. CABIN FEVER
5. THE GRUDGE
6. JEEPERS CREEPERS
7. SCARY MOVIE 3
8. INTERNET QUEEN

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ALIPIN	2	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
CABIN FEVER	3	ALIPIN
JEEPERS CREEPERS	4	CABIN FEVER

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OUT OF TIME	1	OUT OF TIME
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	2	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
STAR RUNNER	3	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
THE WISHER	4	STAR RUNNER
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	5	INNER SENSES

Star Mills San Fernando Pampanga (045)875-1927 (045)861-5270		Imus (046)471-8188 / 875-5858
SCARY MOVIE 3	1	JEEPERS CREEPERS
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	2	RUGRATS GO WILD
OUT OF TIME	3	ALIPIN
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	4	CABIN FEVER
COLD CREEK MANOR	5	ELF
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2	6	STAR RUNNER

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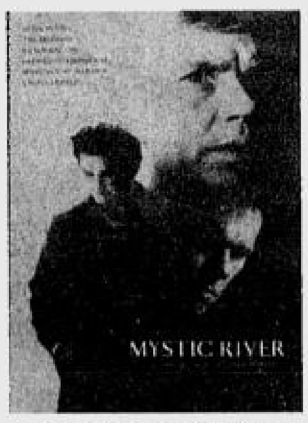
SCARY MOVIE 3	1	SCARY MOVIE 3
FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS	2	GIGLI
UPTOWN GIRLS	3	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
DARK BLUE	4	UPTOWN GIRLS
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	5	SEX SCANDAL
CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	6	THE WISHER



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CABIN FEVER
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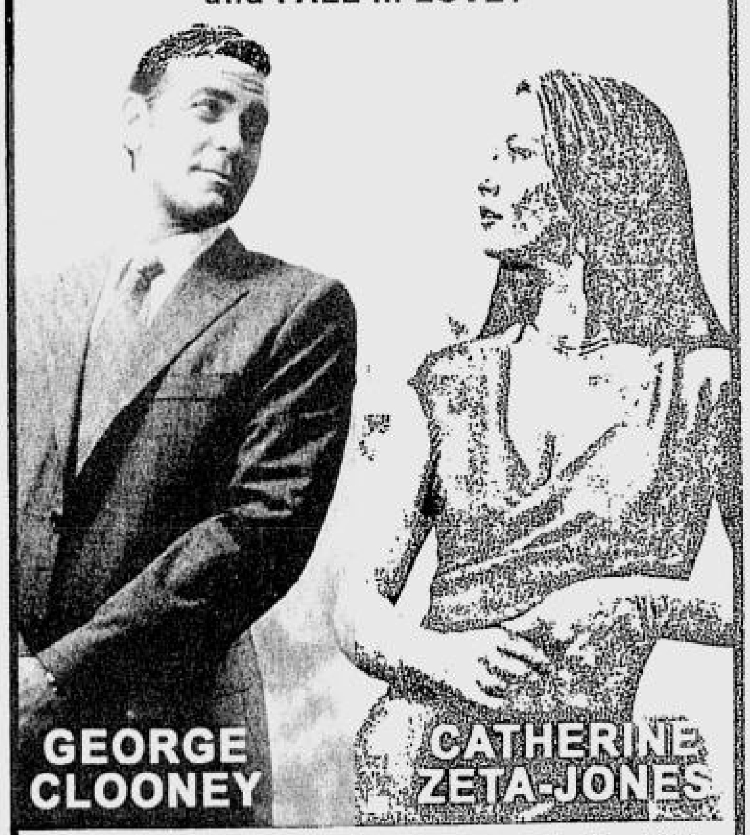
In the BATTLE of the SEXES, who will be the FIRST to BLINK and FALL in LOVE?



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MAGIC 89.9

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INTOLERABLE CRUELTY PG13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	CABIN FEVER R18 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00	MYSTIC RIVER R13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20

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1 ELF	1 ELF	ArtFilm 1 BALZAC 12:20, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	THX 1 MYSTIC RIVER
2 MYSTIC RIVER	2 THE GRUDGE	2 MYSTIC RIVER 12:35, 3:25, 6:15, 9:05	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 MYSTIC RIVER 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:15	2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 CABIN FEVER	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 MYSTIC RIVER 2:00, 4:50, 7:50, 10:30	Onstage REGINE VELASQUEZ Dec. 12 & 13, 19 & 20 - 9pm	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	3 ELF
4 OUT OF TIME	4 GOOD BOY		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 ELF 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:05, 11:15	4 GOOD BOY
	5 RUGRATS GO WILD		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 OUT OF TIME 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	5 RUGRATS GO WILD
	6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY			
	7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2			

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Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Ali 1	ALIPIN
Ali 2	ELF
Ali 3	CABIN FEVER
Ali 4	MYSTIC RIVER
Ali 5	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
Ali 6	RUGRATS
Ali 7	GOODBOY

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ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ALIPIN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	ANG BABAE SA BREAKWATER
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MR. SUAVE
CINEMA-2	ALIPIN
CINEMA-3	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	OUT OF TIME
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CINEMA-8	18 KARATS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	GOOD BOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MYSTIC RIVER
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	RUGRATS GO WILD
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-15	ELF

LORES

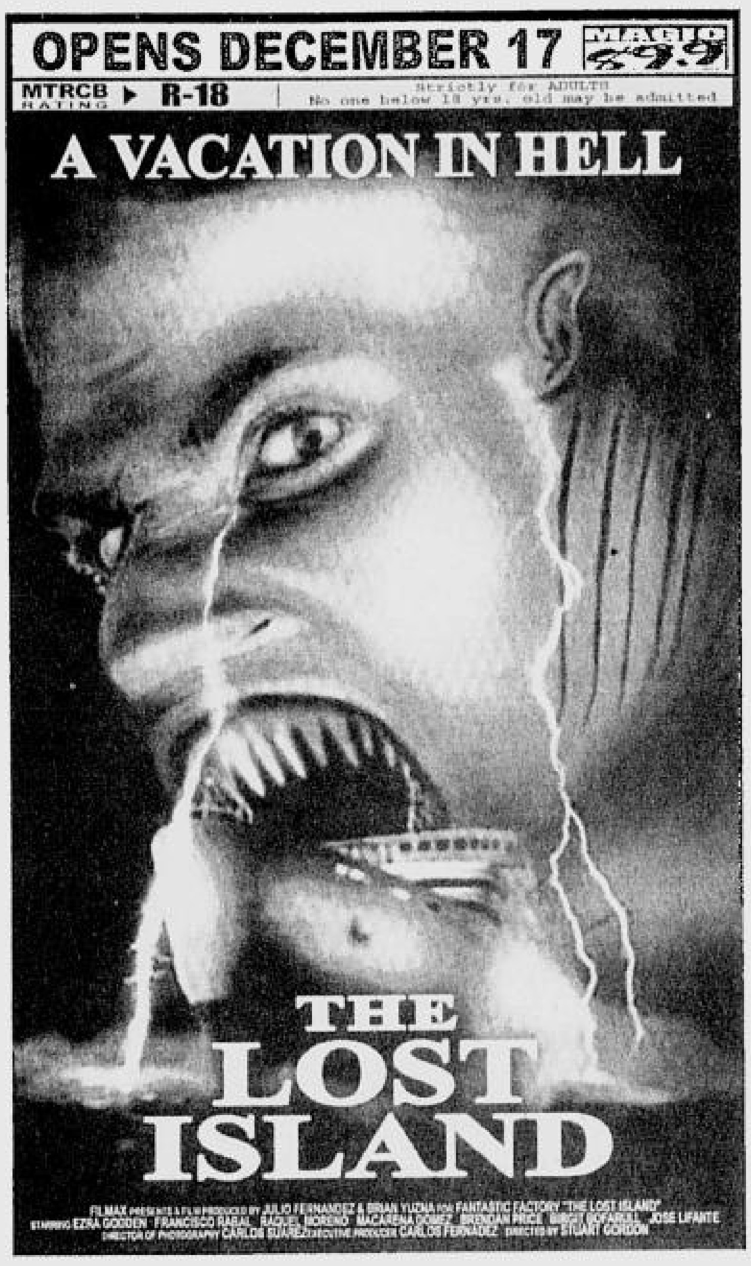
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	WRONG TURN
CINEMA-1	CHAVIT
CINEMA-2	LOONEY TUNES
CINEMA-4	DARK BLUE

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA



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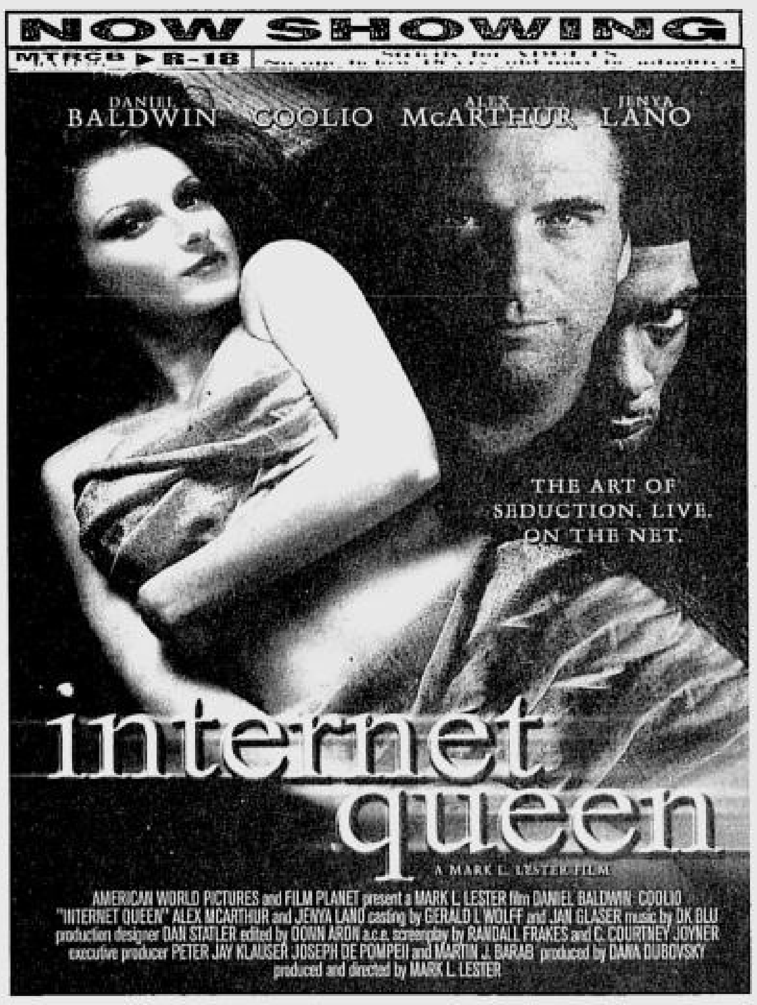
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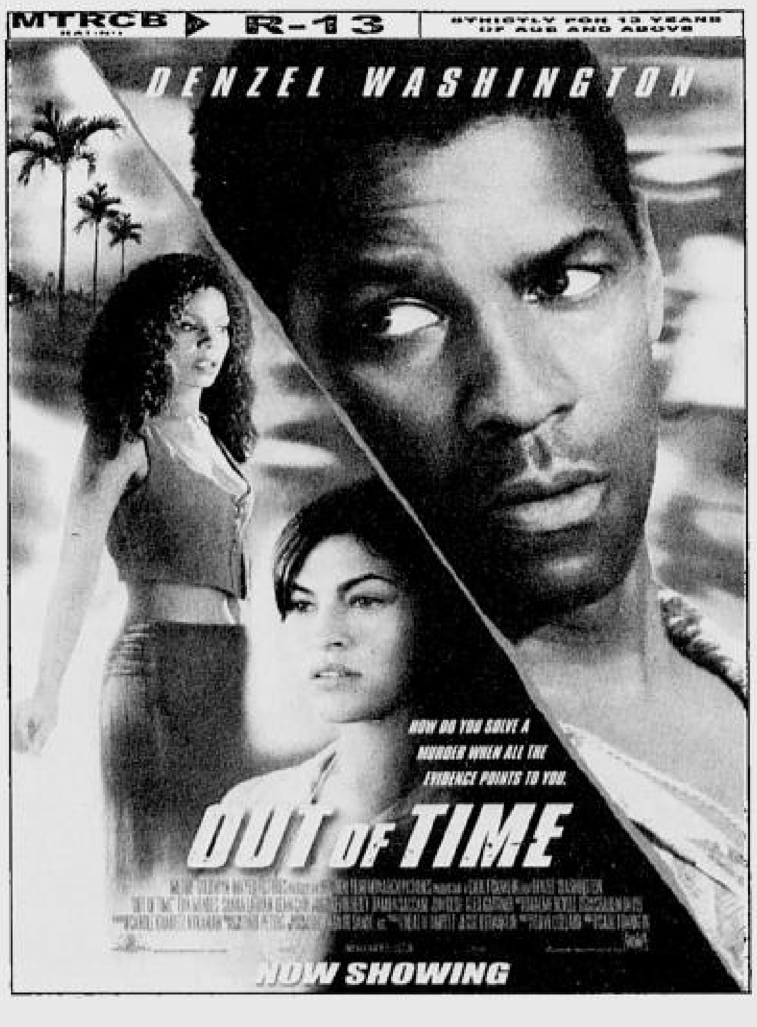
DANIEL BALDWIN
COOLIO
ALEX McARTHUR
JENYA LANO
THE ART OF SEDUCTION. LIVE. ON THE NET.
internet queen
A MARK L. LESTER FILM

AMERICAN WORLD PICTURES and FILM PLANET present a MARK L. LESTER film DANIEL BALDWIN COOLIO "INTERNET QUEEN" ALEX McARTHUR and JENYA LANO casting by GERALD I. WOLFF and JAN GLASER music by DK BLU production designer DAN STATLER edited by DONN ARON a.c.e. screenplay by RANDALL FRAKES and C. COURTNEY JOYNER executive producer PETER JAY KLAUSER JOSEPH DE POMPEII and MARTIN J. BARAB produced by DANA DUBOVSKY produced and directed by MARK L. LESTER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3 (DTS)	OUT OF TIME
4 GOLD (DTS-ES)	GOOD BOY
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	RUGRATS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	MYSTIC RIVER
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
8	MR. SUAVE
9	ELF
10	THE GRUDGE-1

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3 (DTS)	RESERVE
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2	STAR RUNNER
3	MR SUAVE

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1	OUT OF TIME
2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3	CABIN FEVER
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	MYSTIC RIVER
5	ALIPIN

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1	ALIPIN
2	CABIN FEVER
3	MYSTIC RIVER
4	INTERNET QUEEN
5	STAR RUNNER
6	OUT OF TIME

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1	THE TRAIN
2	PILYA

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 893-4225, 892-2503

MYSTIC RIVER

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2	LOONEY TUNES

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC
tel 930.9515

1	
2	
3	

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) TEL. 776-74-21

1	SUGAT SA PURI
2	ALIPIN NG ALIW
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (SDDS)	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	ALIPIN
6	RUGRATS GO WILD
7 (DTS)	MYSTIC RIVER
8 (SDDS)	JEEPER CREEPERS
9 (DOLBY)	GOOD BOY

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364-3781

1	ALIPIN
2	MR. SUAVE
3	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 (SDDS)	CABIN FIVER
5	STAR RUNNER
6 (DOLBY)	INTERNET QUEEN
7 (DTS)	JEEPER CREEPERS
8	BABAE SA BREAK WATER
9	AKO, IKAW, SIYA

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082

1	ALIPIN
2 (SDDS)	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER
4 (DOLBY)	CABIN FIVER
5	MR. SUAVE

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	ALIPIN
2	MR. SUAVE
3 (DTS)	CABIN FIVER
4	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 (SDDS)	STAR RUNNER

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	RESERVE

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	ALIPIN
Lords	ALIPIN
Jennet	RESERVE

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	GOOD BOY
2	ALIPIN
3	MR. SUAVE
4	RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2	GOOD BOY
3	RESERVE
4	CABIN FIVER
5	ALIPIN

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	ALIPIN
2	MEDALLION

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta

Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	ALIPIN
2	ELF
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CAVIN FEVER
4 (SDDS)	MYSTIC RIVER
5 (DTS)	JEEPERS CREEPERS-2
6	RUGRATS GO WILD
7	GOOD BOY

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0926

1	OUT OF TIME
2	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
3 (DTS)	WISHER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	ELF
2 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER
3 (DOLBY)	OUT OF TIME
4	THE PHONE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	STAR RUNNER
2 (DOLBY)	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 (DTS)	OUT OF TIME
4	WISHER

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	WRONG TURN
2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 (DOLBY)	LOONEY TUNE
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	MY BOSS DAUGHTER
2	SEX SCANDAL
3 (DOLBY)	WRONG TURN
4 (DTS)	LOONEY TUNES

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	
2 (DTS)	
3	

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	THE TRAIN
2	EVANGELENE KATORSE
3 (DTS)	18 KARAT
4	TUKSO NG PANAHON

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	STAR RUNNER
2	THE PHONE
3 (DTS)	OUT OF TIME
4	SEX SCANDAL
5	AKO, IKAW, SIYA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	MAPUPULANG LABI
2	BABAE SA BREAK WATER
3	

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	STAR RUNNER
2	OUT OF TIME
3	MAPUPULANG LABI

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2	ANG BABAE SA BREAK WATER
3 (DTS)	LOONEY TUNES
4	DARK BLUE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3	

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	OUT OF TIME
2	FIGHTING TEMPTATION
3	STAR RUNNER
4	BABAE SA BREAK WATER

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

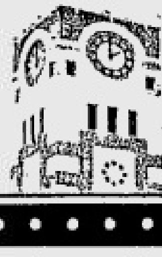
1 (DOLBY EX)	COLD CREEK MANOR
2	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 (DTS-ES)	OUT OF TIME
4	FIGHTING TEMPTATION

Cine Neno Mall
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887-0121

1	COLD CREEK MANOR
2	OUT OF TIME
3 (DOLBY)	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4 (DTS)	FIGHTING TEMPTATION

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS



OPENING IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

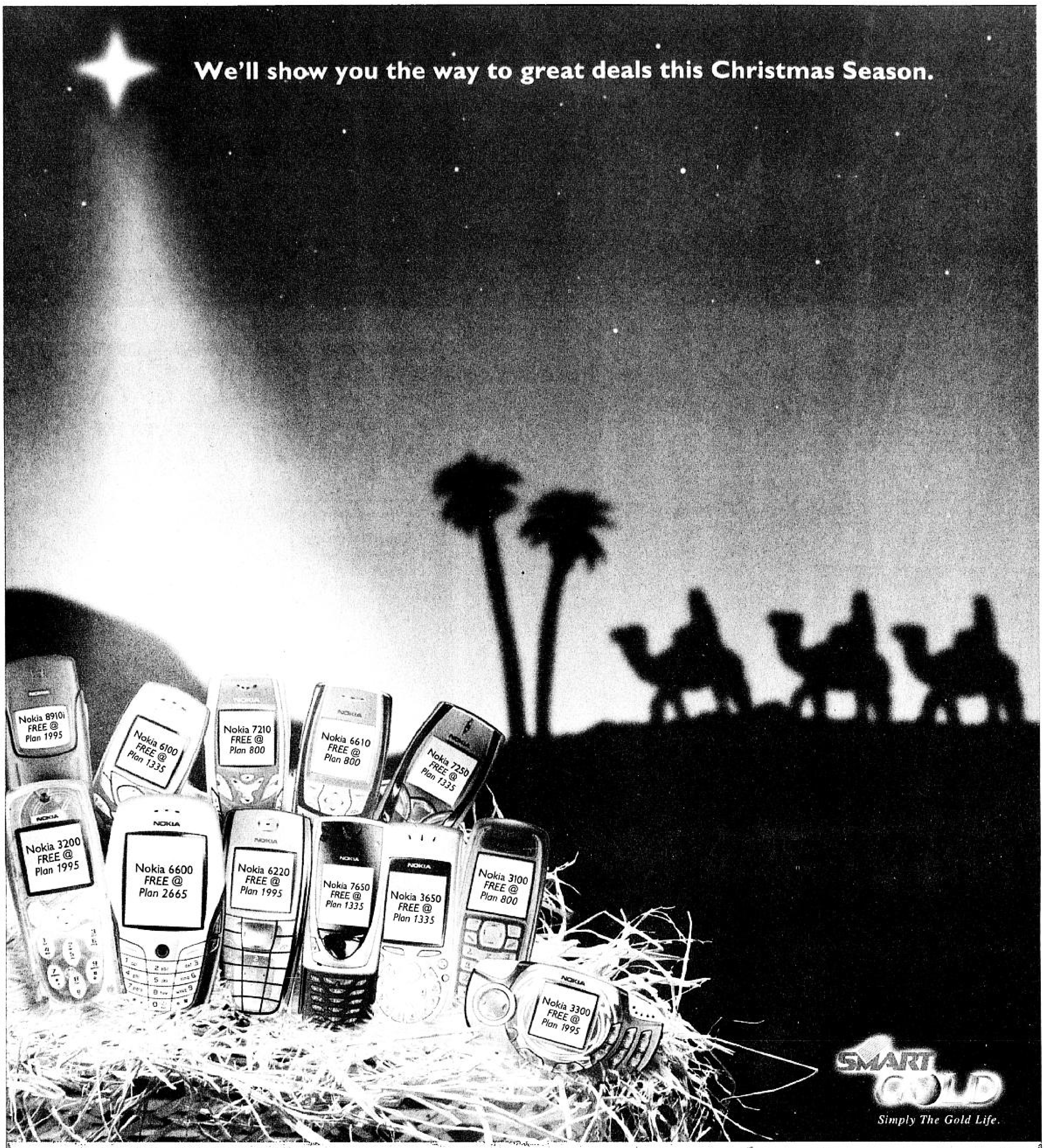
EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE!

- The Philippines' first Rocker Seats with retractable armrest
- Stadium seating for unobstructed viewing
- Automated Box Offices for easy ticket purchasing
- 4 Dolby Digital EX cinemas for the best in cinematic sound environment

FOR INQUIRIES, CALL 867-8913 TO


We'll show you the way to great deals this Christmas Season.
Nokia 8910i FREE @ Plan 1995
Nokia 6100 FREE @ Plan 1335
Nokia 7210 FREE @ Plan 800
Nokia 6610 FREE @ Plan 800
Nokia 7250 FREE @ Plan 1335
Nokia 3200 FREE @ Plan 1995
Nokia 6600 FREE @ Plan 2665
Nokia 6220 FREE @ Plan 1995
Nokia 7650 FREE @ Plan 1335
Nokia 3650 FREE @ Plan 1335
Nokia 3100 FREE @ Plan 800
Nokia 3300 FREE @ Plan 1995
SMART GOLD
Simply The Gold Life.

Check out these ideal holiday gift suggestions from SMART and Nokia.

MMS-capable • Monthly plans include FREE call minutes and text messages • Widest coverage • Wide selection of value-added services

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Special deals also await new subscribers (non-switchers). So visit the SMART Wireless Center nearest you today.
You may also avail of these handsets via SMART VIP Delivery. (Pls. fill-out and fax the form below.)

NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE

SMART
Simply Amazing!

See flyers for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3575, Series of 2003.

Please deliver my SMART Gold postpaid phone for FREE!

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Name:______________________________
Last Name First Name Middle Name
Home Address:______________________________
No. Street Barangay
____
City ZIP code
Home Contact No.:______________ Date of Birth:____/____/____Age:____
Month Day Year
Mother's Maiden Name:______________________________
Name of Spouse:______________________________
Spouse's Business Address:______________________________
Contact No. of Spouse:______________________________

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Office/Company Name:______________________________
Position In Company:______________________________
Office/Company Address:______________________________
No. Street Barangay
______________________________Office/Company Tel. No.:______________
City ZIP code

I affirm that the given information is true and correct and hereby authorize SMART Communications, Inc. to verify such information from whatever sources it may consider appropriate. I understand that I may be requested to submit additional requirements to facilitate the processing of this application. I also authorize SMART Communications, Inc. to charge the advanced Monthly Service Fee to my credit card.

Accomplish this form and fax it to (02) 511-2213 up to 2214 for Metro Manila; (032) 232-3014 for Metro Cebu; (082) 224-5782 for Metro Davao together with a photocopy of your credit card showing both sides and a copy of your valid ID with photo and signature. Areas covered in Metro Cebu: Cebu City, Talisay City, Lapu-Lapu City, and Mandaue City. In Metro Davao: Tibungco to Toril.

Credit card details
☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ BPI EXPRESS CREDIT ☐ DINERS CLUB
Type: ☐ Gold ☐ Silver Card Issuer Bank: ______________
Card No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Expiry Date ☐☐ ☐☐ Last 3 digits at the back of the credit card ☐☐☐
Month Year
Credit Card Billing Address: ☐ Home ☐ Office
☐ Others______________

☐ I would like to avail of a Nokia ______ under ☐ Plan 800 ☐ Plan 1335 and will enroll my account under the Auto Debit Agreement (ADA) and have my monthly bills charged to my credit card.
☐ I would like to avail of a Nokia ______ under ☐ Plan 1995 ☐ Plan 2665
Deliver my phone for FREE to: ☐ Home Address ☐ Office Address
Deliver my SMART monthly bill to: ☐ Home Address ☐ Office Address
☐ Please charge my SMART monthly bill to my credit card.
Note: Applications are subject to the approval of the bank and SMART Communications, Inc.

For SMART's use only:
MIN:
Account No.

Customer Signature over Printed Name:______________ Date:______________

Requirements*:

- For switchers, surrender your active non-SMART postpaid GSM SIM.
- To switch to Plan 800, bring recent 2 months' paid non-SMART billing statements with a minimum of P1,250 per month. If bill is less than P1,250 per month, subscriber must submit proof of income of P20,000 per month.
  To switch to Plan 1335, bring recent 2 months' paid non-SMART billing statements with a minimum of P1,800 per month. If bill is less than P1,800 per month, subscriber must submit proof of income of P23,000 per month.
  To switch to Plan 1995 and get a Nokia 3300, 6220, or 3200, bring recent 2 months' paid non-SMART billing statements with a minimum of P1,800 per month. If bill is less than P1,800 per month, subscriber must submit proof of income of P23,000 per month.
  To switch to Plan 1995 and get a Nokia 8910i, bring recent 2 months' paid non-SMART billing statements with a minimum of P2,450 per month. If bill is less than P2,450 per month, subscriber must submit proof of income of P28,000 per month.
  To switch to Plan 2665, bring recent 2 months' paid non-SMART billing statements with a minimum of P2,450 per month. If bill is less than P2,450 per month, subscriber must submit proof of income of P28,000 per month.
- Switchers and new subscribers (non-switchers) must submit a fully accomplished Service Application Form (SAF), valid I.D., proof of billing address, and financial documents or any locally-issued credit card** with the latest paid bill.
- New subscribers (non-switchers) availing of free handsets under Plan 800 or Plan 1335 must pay the advanced Monthly Service Fee (MSF) via credit card and enroll their account under the Auto Debit Agreement (ADA) to have their monthly bill charged to their enrolled credit card.
- Approval of all applications is subject to SMART credit and financial requirements.

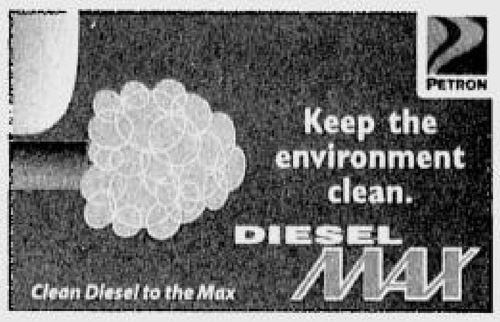
*All plans are covered by a 24-month contract period. Pre-termination charges apply. **Credit card transactions are subject to bank approval.

For questions, comments, or concerns, you may call the SMART Hotline at 888-1111; send a text message to 888 (P1.00 per message in excess of the FREE TEXT allocation); e-mail us at smartgold@smart.com.ph or visit the nearest SMART Wireless Center.

BUSINESS

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inq7money.net

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Assistant Editor **Corrie S. Narisma**



Single-fare scheme for LRT scrapped

By Abigail L. Ho

STARTING Monday, passengers of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1) will have to pay P3 more to travel from one end of the railway system to the other.

The Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) is scrapping the single-fare scheme that it has been implementing since it started operations in 1984.

Under the new fare scheme, passengers will pay a minimum fare of P12 and a maximum fare of P15, unlike the 19-year-old fare structure that has a P12 flat rate for the whole line, except if a passenger rides at any of the last four stations at either end.

For the first four stations, a passenger will be charged P12. Passengers using the single journey or one-ride-only cards will have to pay P15 for all succeeding stations after the first four, while those using stored value cards will have fares that go up by P1 increments after every four stations.

If an LRT-1 passenger, for example, gets on the train at the Monumento station in Caloocan and gets off at Blumentritt station, or four stations after, he pays P12. If, however, he decides to get off at Tayuman station in Manila, or five stations after, he then has to pay P13.

For someone using a single journey card, getting on at the Monumento station and alighting at the Tayuman station will mean a P15 fare.

The new fare scheme likewise eliminates the P2 fare for passengers who get on the train at any of the last four stations at either end of the Monumento-to-Baclaran line.

LRTA planning manager Evangeline Razon said in a presentation to the media yesterday that the new fare scheme was designed to allow the railway system to become more viable as well as give it additional cash to finance its operational as well as debt-servicing requirements.

She said the fare rationalization scheme would rake in an additional P185 million a year for the LRTA.

The LRTA last adjusted its fare in February 2000, increasing it from P10 to P12. The last big fare adjustment before that, a P5 increase implemented in September 1999, lasted all of two days as it was met by public uproar. The P10 fare then was jacked up to P15.

LRTA Administrator Teodoro Cruz Jr. said the LRTA badly needed a fare adjustment as it could not address its debt-servicing requirements.

Being a government-owned and-controlled corporation (GOCC), the LRTA relied on the national treasury for its debt servicing. However, the government this year passed up on LRTA loan payments due to its ballooning budget deficit.

"For the first six months of the year, the P250 million that we had to pay (to creditors) came from our own budget," Cruz said.

He said the LRTA had to resort to a fare adjustment so it could stay afloat.

OFWs arrive from Kuwait. PDI PHOTO

Cross-cultural competence of OFWs

By Dr. Joyce Mondejar-Dy
(First of two parts)

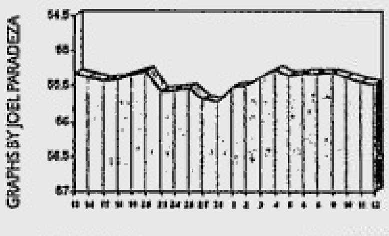
A BIG portion of the Filipino population will continue to travel outside the country as overseas workers (Villegas, 2001). OFWs have the advantage over a host of professions and occupations in countries experiencing shortage of skills. This is so because of the following factors: OFWs have above-average levels of education; they are culturally adaptable or competent; they are fluent and confident in speaking the English language; they have acquired a reputation for competence and positive work attitude, and they are cheerful, conscientious and adaptable to new environments. These competencies have positioned OFWs in filling manpower gaps, especially in European countries suffering from depopulation such as Spain and Italy (Laurel, 2003).

A typical OFW is fit to work in an evolving global workplace, being recognized as a valu

THE/ B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

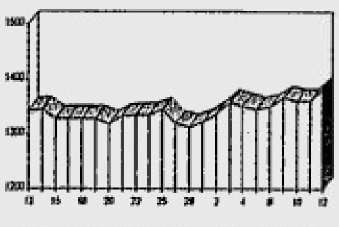
₱ 55.470=$ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 12, 2003

¥ 107.93 =$ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 12, 2003

GOLD: $405.90-406.40
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 12, 2003

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

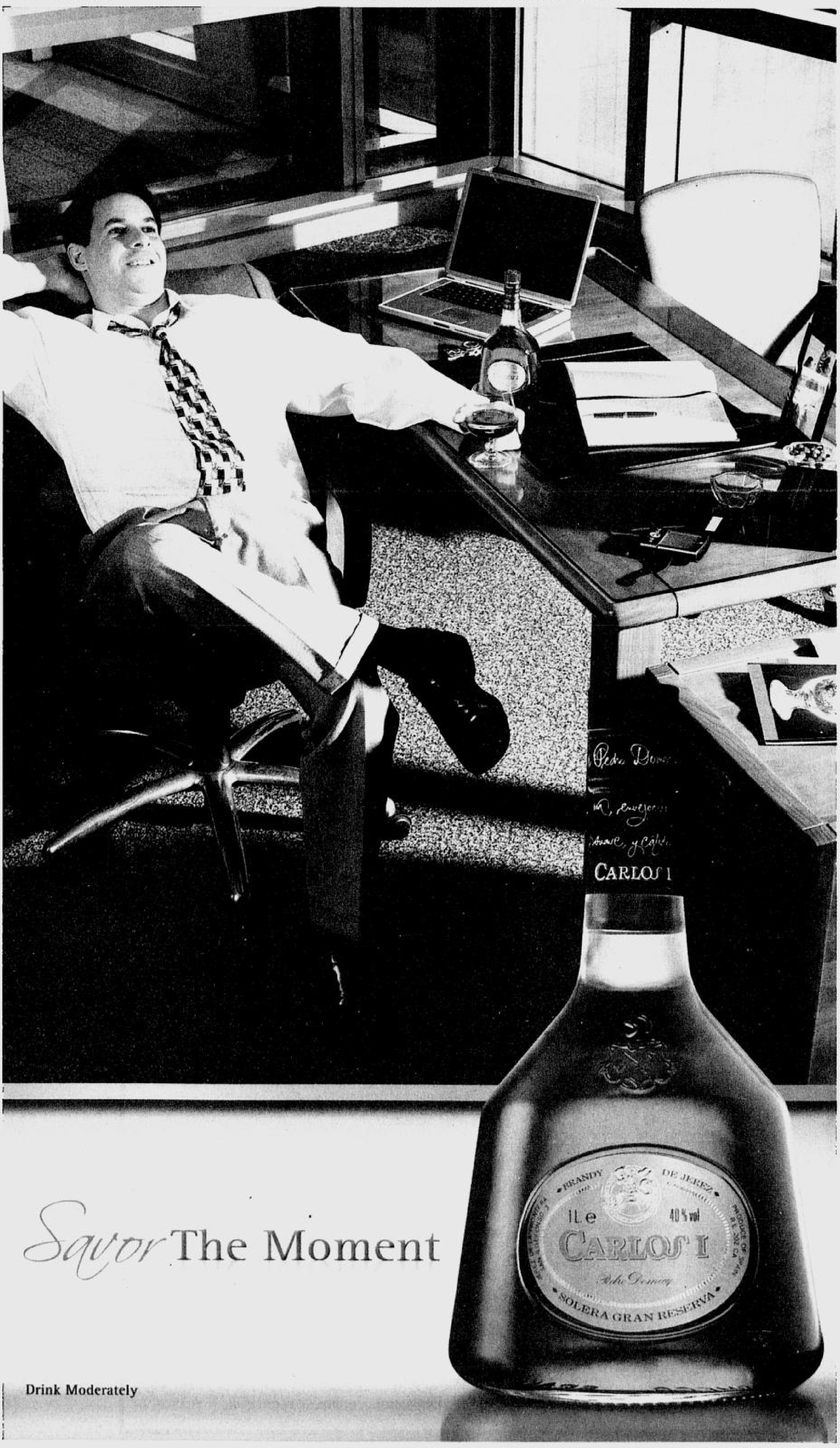
Stocks surge to 1-month high

STOCKS hit their highest level since Nov. 11 yesterday, inspired by foreign interest in blue chips with bright earnings prospects.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the country's biggest phone firm, led the charge by gaining 4.76 percent or P40 to P880.

"Foreign interest in PLDT pulled up the market. This is in anticipation that 2004 will be a good year for the company," said Asi

STOCKS/ B2



Republic of the Philippines

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Manila

DEPUTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT INCLUDING THE NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENSURING FREE, ORDERLY, HONEST, PEACEFUL AND CREDIBLE CONDUCT OF THE MAY 10, 2004 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.

PRESENT:

ABALOS, Sr., Benjamin S.	Chairman
TANCANGCO, Luzviminda G.,	Commissioner
JAVIER, Rufino S.B.,	Commissioner
LANTION, Ralph C.,	Commissioner
SADAIN, Mehol K.,	Commissioner
BORRA, Resurreccion Z.,	Commissioner
TUASON, Jr. Florentino A.,	Commissioner

Promulgated:
10 December 2003

RESOLUTION NO. 6454

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code and other election laws, the Commission on Elections may deputize law enforcement agencies and instrumentalities of the government, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and exercise direct supervision and control over such agencies required by law to perform duties relative to the conduct of elections;

WHEREAS, there is a need to deputize , with the concurrence of the President of the Philippines, such law enforcement agencies and instrumentalities of the government, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines and to prescribe their duties and functions to ensure the holding of free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible national and local elections on May 10, 2004;

WHEREAS, the conduct of the elections is a purely and absolutely civilian process which, however, requires the assistance and cooperation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other law enforcement agencies and instrumentalities of the government.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission on Elections, by virtue of the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code and other related election laws, has **RESOLVED** to deputize, as it hereby deputizes the following law enforcement agencies and instrumentalities of the government, to perform specific duties relative to the conduct of the elections, as follows:

1. THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES

The Department of National Defense, its Department Secretary, and Undersecretaries and the Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Commanding General of the Philippine Army, the Flag Officer-in-Command of the Philippine Navy, the Commanding General of the Philippine Air Force, and all the officers and enlisted personnel under their respective commands are hereby deputized to ensure free, honest, orderly, peaceful and credible national and local elections on May 10, 2004;

The Secretary of National Defense shall enforce the orders and instructions of the Commission relative to the election duties and functions of the officers and members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The above-named officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and their men shall have the following duties and functions as deputies of the Commission:

1) Provide security to polling places and to members of the boards of election inspectors, personnel of the Commission and other employees of the government performing election duties;

2) Make available certain facilities, such as land, air, and water-craft; communication systems and other equipment, in connection with the delivery and retrieval of election documents, supplies, forms, paraphernalia and equipment;

3) Look into the existence of any armed group organized to commit, or which is committing or about to commit, acts of terrorism or threats to intimidate or coerce any person to vote for or against a candidate and to suppress or prevent said acts of terrorism or threats;

4) Assist the Commission in effectively implementing election laws and/or rules and regulations, particularly the laws governing prohibitions against policemen and provincial guards acting as bodyguards or security guards, use of armored vehicles and air or water-craft, and bearing, carrying or transporting firearms and other deadly weapons in public places;

5) Conduct a periodic assessment of the peace and order conditions in critical areas and recommend measures which may be adopted by the Commission in the interest of free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections; and

6) Comply with and/or implement directives or resolutions which the Commission may issue or promulgate from time to time.

2. THE NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE

The Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, National Police Commission and its Commission, the Philippine National Police and its Director General, are hereby deputized in connection with the May 10, 2004 national and local elections, and as such, shall:

1) Effect no changes, during the election period, in the assignments of regional, district, provincial, city and station unit commanders and all PNP personnel under his command without the prior written permission of the Commission;

2) Direct the officers and enlisted personnel under his command to strictly observed the following duties and functions:

   a) Provide security to polling places, the members of the boards of election inspectors and the voters whenever the need therefor arises, or whenever the Commission through its Election Officers so requires;

   b) Provide security to COMELEC personnel and representatives performing duties and functions in connection with the elections whenever a request to this effect is made or when required by the Commission;

   c) Take steps to protect voters from threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or reprisal;

   d) Enforce the following prohibited acts under Section 261 of the Omnibus Election Code:

      I) Paragraph (m) on appointment or use of special policemen, special agents, confidential agents or the like;

      ii) Paragraph (p) on possession of deadly weapons;

      iii) Paragraph (q) on carrying of firearms outside residence or place of business;

      iv) Paragraph (r) on the use of armored land vehicles, water or air-craft;

      v) Paragraph (s), as amended by Section 32 of Republic Act No. 7166, on wearing of uniforms and bearing of arms;

      vi) Paragraph (t), as amended by Section 33 of Republic Act No. 7166, on policemen and provincial guards acting as bodyguards or security guards;

      vii) Paragraph (u) on reaction, strike forces or similar forces; and

      viii) Ban on dispensing, selling and taking of intoxicating liquor.

   e) Take effective measures to prevent members of civilian vigilante units and barangay tanods from engaging in partisan political activities or any act of terrorism, intimidation, coercion, harassment, or reprisal;

   f) Take steps to prevent private security agencies from acting as private armies of any candidate or as campaigners for terroristic or violent acts against persons in connection with the May 10, 2004 national and local elections;

   g) Implement strictly the rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission in provinces, cities, municipalities and barangay which may be placed under COMELEC control;

   h) Enforce specific orders of the Commission to confiscate or tear down prohibited election propaganda or advertisement;

   i) Perform such other functions and duties or implement such other directives as the Commission may issue from time to time; and

   j) Render periodic reports on actions taken in accordance with this deputation.

3. THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

The National Bureau of Investigation, its Director and all agents under him are designated deputies for purposes of the May 10, 2004 national and local elections and, upon prior order of the Commission:

1) Deploy its agents to designated places in order to effectively carry out the objective of this resolution, furnishing the Commission with a list of said agents with their respective assignments;

2) Direct its agents to arrest any person who violates the provisions of the Omnibus Election Code and other pertinent election laws and the Rules and Regulations promulgated by the Commission;

3) Report from time to time to the Commission actions taken by him or his agents pursuant to this resolution; and

4) Comply with the orders and directives of the Commission, which shall be given priority over orders and directives from other sources, except the Supreme Court and those issued in habeas corpus proceedings.

4. THE BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and its Director, are hereby designated deputies of the Commission to enforce the following provision of the Omnibus Election Code:

> "SEC. 261 (n). Illegal release of prisoners before and after election. The Director of the Bureau of Prisons, any provincial warden, the keeper of the jail or the person or persons required by the law to keep prisoners in their custody who illegally orders or allows any prisoner detained in the national penitentiary, or the provincial, city or municipal jail to leave the premises thereof sixty days before and thirty days after the election. The municipal or city warden, the provincial warden, the keeper of the jail or the person or persons required by the law to keep prisoners in their custody shall post in three conspicuous public places a list of the prisoners or detention prisoners under their care. Detention prisoners must be categorized as such.",

and to comply with all orders, directives and resolutions, which the Commission may from time to time, promulgate.

PRECEDENCE OF COMELEC ORDERS

Orders issued by the Commission in connection with the May 10, 2004 national and local elections shall take precedence over and above the orders and directives issued by any other office or agency of the government.

However, nothing contained herein shall be construed as in any manner affecting or constituting an impairment of the constitutional powers of the President of the Philippines to conduct and direct the general peace-keeping functions of the Philippine National Police.

EFFECTIVITY

This resolution shall take effect seven (7) days following its publication in at least two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

DISSEMINATION

The Executive Director shall furnish all the above deputized officials and/or departments, offices, or agencies, through their respective heads, copies of this resolution.

The Education and Information Department shall disseminate this resolution for the information of the public.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

LUZVIMINDA G. TANCANGCO
Commissioner

RUFINO S.B. JAVIER
Commissioner

RALPH C. LANTION
Commissioner

MEHOL K. SADAIN
Commissioner

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 12, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17.25	17	17.25	65,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46	46.5	46	46.5	880,700
China Banking Corp.	660	665	660	665	950
Citystate Savings Bank	15	15	15	15	2,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	800,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	7,900
Philippine National Bank	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	3,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	100
Security Bank Corp.	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	4,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	25	25	25	25	1,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Abacus Financial	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1720	1730	1720	1730	460
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1325	1325	1310	1315	1,930
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	25	25	25	25	2,000
Diversified Fin. Network	2	2	2	2	12,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	760	785	760	780	85,670
Ipeople Inc.	1	1	0.98	1	140,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.044	0.045	0.044	0.044	2,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.04	0.041	0.04	0.041	5,300,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.84	0.87	0.84	0.85	3,900,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.46	1.46	1.4	1.44	464,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	865	885	865	880	446,340
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	9,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15	15	14.75	15	164,900
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	24.25	23.5	24	3,814,100
Petron Corporation	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.2	4,362,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	20,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.92	0.9	0.92	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.15	3.25	3.15	3.2	687,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	440,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	10,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	170,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	2,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	6,700
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	54.5	54	54.5	14,300
San Miguel Corp. B	63	63.5	63	63.5	19,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	350,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	70,000
Ayala Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	21,217,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	71,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.025	6,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.85	0.86	0.85	0.86	340,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.4	10	9.4	10	19,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.49	0.47	0.47	2,480,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	250,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	18	18.75	18	18.5	139,800
Ionics Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	37,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	9,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	712,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	520,000
Music Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	190,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1	1	1	1	12,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	900,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.57	0.58	0.55	0.55	2,600,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	24.25	25	24.25	24.75	99,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,600
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	12,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.7	2,592,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.8	43,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	500,000
Cyber Bay Corporation	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.145	1,250,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	1,340,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.06	1.02	1.04	1,255,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.17	0.195	0.17	0.17	660,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	97,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.2	3,244,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	10,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	2,350,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	9,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	25,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	70,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	450,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	100,000
OIL					
Sinophil Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	100,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	700,000

Stocks surge . . .

From page B1

asec Equities research head Oliver Plana.

Analysts said PLDT's rise was helped by the gain in its American Depositary Receipts of 2.28 percent or $0.34 to $15.24 in New York on Thursday.

The main index ended 1.74 percent or 23.72 points higher at 1,383.32. The market is up 35.83 percent this year.

In the broader market, gainers beat losers 35 to 16 and there were 34 stocks unchanged. Turnover dropped to P776.14 million from Thursday's heavy P1.07 billion. *Reuters*

DISCLOSURES

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 60,000 of its own shares at P1.32 each.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Forum Pacific Inc.** were Geronimo Velasco Jr., Peter Salud, William Gatchalian, Donato Almeda, Elvira Ting, Kenneth Gatchalian, Federico Puno, Arthur Ponsaran, Lamberto Mercado Jr., Evelyn dela Rosa and Joaquin Obieta.

* * *

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission approved the merger between listed firm **MBf Inc.** and **IPVG Corp.**

* * *

MAGNUM Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Dec. 19, 3 p.m. at Unit 3C Cypress Gardens Condominium, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of Nov. 25 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

VENUE of **MUSIC Corp.'s** annual stockholders' meeting on Dec. 17, 2 p.m. was changed from Dasmariñas Room of Hotel Intercontinental to the Skytop of the same hotel.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Asian Terminals Inc.** elected Jeremy Rickcord as executive vice president and CEO effective Feb. 1, 2004. The appointments of Mark Ripka and Sean James Perez as senior vice president for South Harbor operations and vice president for marketing and commercial services, respectively, were ratified. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

December 12, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.818800	1.000000	55.4100
Japan	Yen	0.007585	0.009263	0.5133
United Kingdom	Pound	1.428232	1.744300	96.6517
Hongkong	Dollar	0.105458	0.128796	7.1366
Switzerland	Franc	0.644826	0.787526	43.6368
Canada	Dollar	0.621527	0.759071	42.0601
Singapore	Dollar	0.477017	0.582581	32.2808
Australia	Dollar	0.602413	0.735727	40.7666
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.171998	2.652661	146.9839
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218347	0.266667	14.7760
Brunei	Dollar	0.475632	0.580889	32.1871
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020604	0.025164	1.3943
UAE	Dirham	0.222948	0.272287	15.0874
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.221300	67.6722
Argentina	Peso	0.278031	0.339559	18.8150
Brazil	Real	0.278408	0.340020	18.8405
Denmark	Kroner	0.134379	0.164117	9.0937
India	Rupee	0.017987	0.021968	1.2172
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215485	0.263172	14.5824
Mexico	New Peso	0.073554	0.089831	4.9775
New Zealand	Dollar	0.527068	0.643708	35.6679
Norway	Kroner	0.122388	0.149472	8.2822
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014358	0.017535	0.9716
South Africa	Rand	0.128214	0.156588	8.6765
Korea	Won	0.000689	0.000842	0.0467
Sweden	Kroner	0.111254	0.135875	7.5288
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024104	0.029438	1.6312

ADB releases $60M for Pasig River rehab program

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank has released $60 million to the government representing the second and last tranche of a $100-million Pasig River rehabilitation program loan, noting significant progress in project implementation.

Michael Lindfield, ADB's senior officer in charge of the Pasig River Environmental Management and Rehabilitation Sector Development Program, yesterday said 15 parks have either been completed or were being developed along the riverbank.

"These open spaces, 10 meters wide, provide much-needed breathing space for the cramped riverside communities," Lindfield said.

"In these areas, flows of raw sewage and storm water into the river have been considerably reduced and local governments are preparing ambitious plans for urban renewal."

The Pasig River, the main waterway flowing through Metro Manila between Laguna de Bay and Manila Bay, is of historic, social, cultural and commercial importance. However, it is heavily polluted due to indiscriminate discharge of untreated municipal and industrial wastewater and solid waste.

This program loan, which is due for completion in 2005, is part of the $176-million integrated loan package that the ADB approved in 2000 to improve health and living conditions for the riverside communities and to bring marine life back to the river.

"The government's implementation of the policy and investment programs is having a positive impact in the Pasig River basin," Lindfield said, noting progress in meeting loan conditions and the impact of the improvements on the riverbank and their residents.

Project proponents hope that the river would be suitable for activities such as boating by 2014.

The program had a $75-million investment loan component that promotes physical improvements to enhance water quality, improve the tributaries and canals, and promote renewal and redevelopment along the riverbank. Also included was a $1-million technical assistance grant to build the capacity of involved government agencies.

The policy agenda for the river has likewise moved forward with the strengthening of central institutions for water quality monitoring and policing of wastewater discharges. A number of companies had been summoned under the program, the bank said.

In addition, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, the executing agency of the project, is supporting reform of water quality regulations. The bank said it believed these policy actions would have far-reaching implications, raising costs for polluting industries and requiring additional investments in solid waste and waste water handling.

9 firms investing ₱300M in Subic

By Michelle V. Remo

THE SUBIC Bay Metropolitan Authority has signed a contract with nine companies that will infuse P300 million to put up operations at the Subic Bay Freeport, SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo announced yesterday.

Payumo said the nine firms were mostly engaged in seaport facility development, hotel and restaurant operations, clinical therapy, health spa operations and vehicle services.

"Subic is a unique industrial zone offering multi-faceted facilities and services of a total community complementing the needs of investors, residents and tourists," Payumo said in a statement, adding the entry of more businesses in Subic would further boost the economic vibrancy of the area.

Global Terminal and Development Inc. (GTDI), which will rehabilitate and develop the former ship repair facility in Subic so it could accommodate local and foreign luxury ships, will invest P156 million.

GTDI president Rose Baldeo said the development of the seaport facility would initially require about 100 workers and was expected to house luxury ships and commercial cargo vessels going to and from various Asian countries.

Baldeo added the strategic location of Subic as well as the tourism amenities situated in the area, such as duty-free shops, beaches and casino-hotels, were the main factors that could attract more business in the area.

Ritz Tropical Spa, which will set up a tropical resort spa at the Bicentennial Park and Lagoon, will invest P55 million and hire about 50 workers.

Days Hotel and M&H Subic Inc., which will establish and develop buildings into five-star hotels, will invest P25 million each.

"We put our investments where the tourist goes, and we found Subic as a real destination with remarkable all-year round high number of tourist arrivals," Days Hotel president James Concepcion said.

Other firms that will operate in Subic included Sizzlers Foods Corp., Precision Tek Motor Service Corp., Ashley Bestfoods Corp. and Crown Peak Foundation Inc. Another museum-type of restaurant will also be established in the area by singer Pilita Corales.

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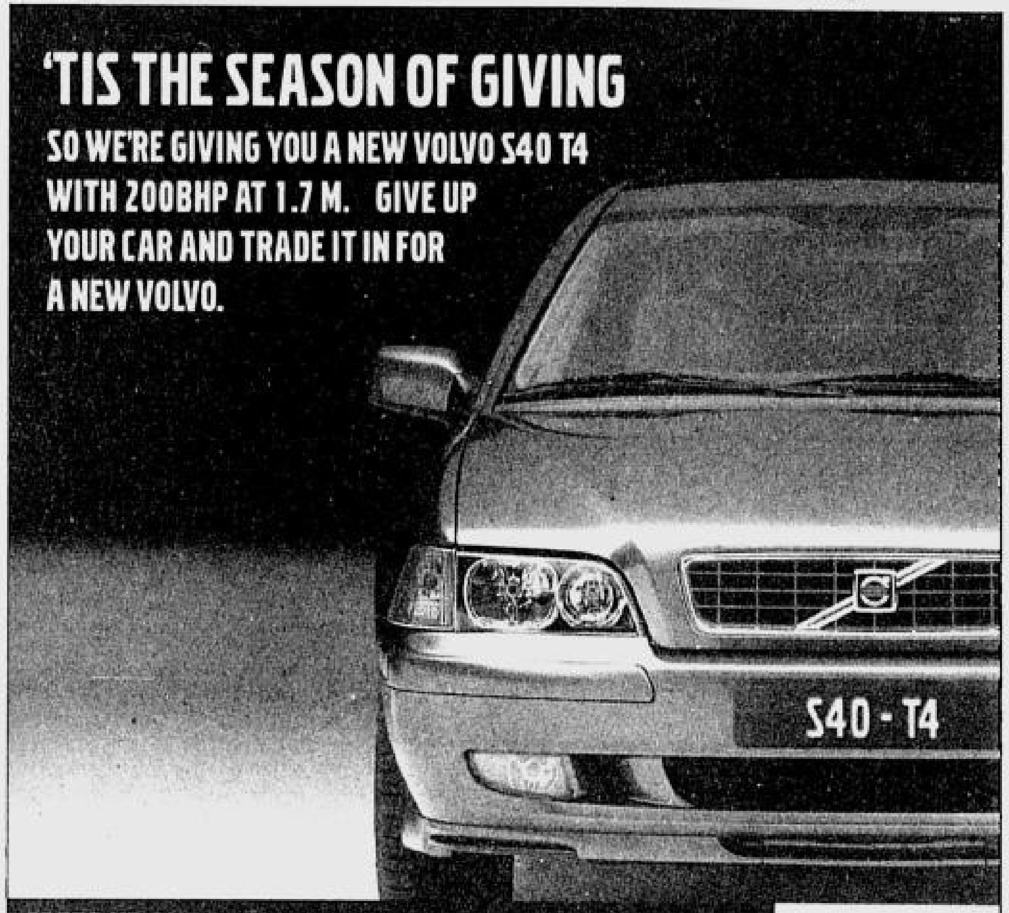

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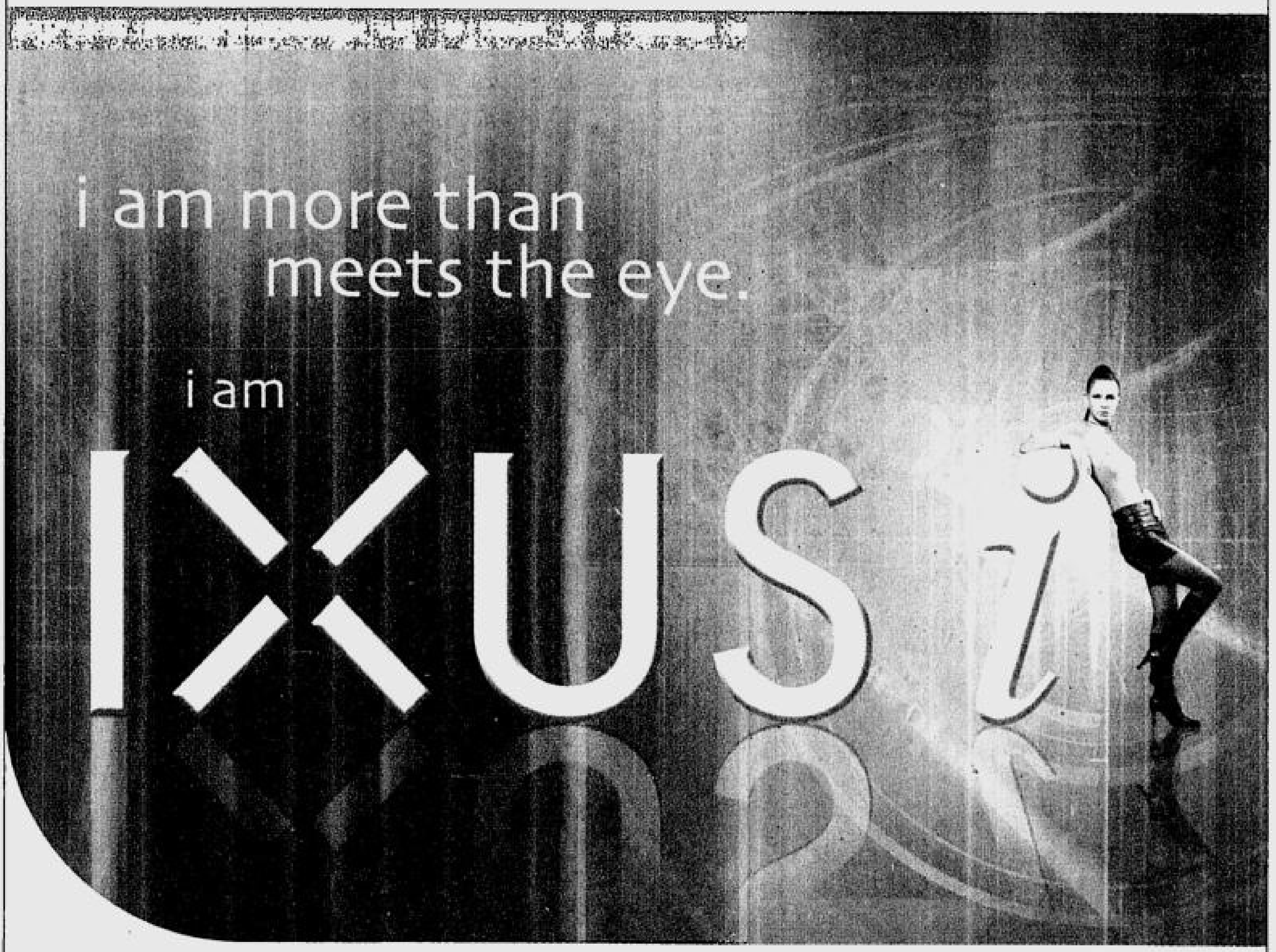

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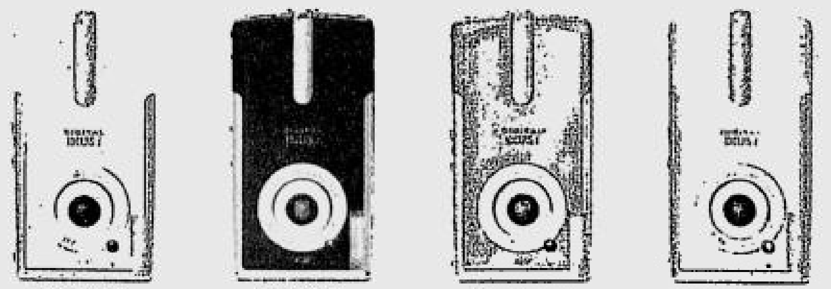

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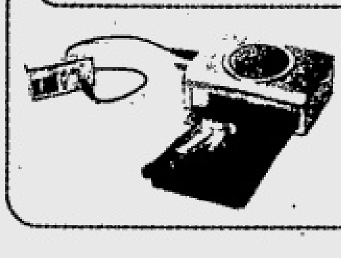

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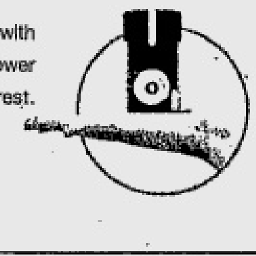

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Gov't to remain cautious in forging free trade pacts

By Gil C Cabacungan Jr.

Tokyo, Japan via PLDT—President Macapagal-Arroyo has assured the public that her government will only agree to a free trade arrangement with Japan if it will lead to a net positive result for the country.

In a talk with reporters Thursday night, Ms Macapagal said: "What we have to weigh in the negotiations for an economic partnership agreement (EPA) with Japan is to make sure that for the balance we gain."

That despite growing disenchantment among nations on the fast pace of trade liberalization, the President said that the country has little choice but forge ahead with free trade agreement such as the one being crafted with Japan.

"Liberalization has its upside and downside. It's there and if we don't enter into this agreement with Japan all our rivals will and they will beat us in this big market," the President said. "In the end, the countries that have stayed in the monastery are the ones that have been left behind. We just have to make sure that we are competitive." She said that China's entry into the World Trade Organization has been beneficial to the country because it has further swelled the country's positive trade balance with China.

The President said she would not hesitate to change gears in opening the market especially if this was hurting local industries such as the petrochemical and sugar sectors where the Philippines had successfully lobbied for a reversal of the tariff reductions.

Japan has agreed to enter government-level negotiations on EPA with the Philippines (as well as Thailand and Malaysia) starting January with the goal of wrapping up discussion within 12 months. These talks will run parallel with the proposed free trade area between Japan and Asean.

The Philippines is expected to demand for greater entry for its citizens to Japan which, in turn, is seeking more liberal entry for its industrial and consumer durable to the country.

The Philippines is particularly interested in sending more caregivers to Japan to serve its fast-growing population of elderly.

Cross-cultural competence . . .

From page B1

able asset in worldwide economic development (Laurel, 2003 in jobstreet.com).

Filipino management professionals and top executives possess deeply embedded Filipino cultural traits that have global equivalence based on studies using the lexical approach (Church, Katigbak & Reyes, 2000).

Global personality traits

To date, lexically-based studies to determine the cross-cultural universality of certain personality traits (Big Five model) have been conducted primarily in American English and in several European languages, such as German, Hungarian, Italian, Russian, Turkish and Czech.

Researchers have interpreted their results in the context of the Big-Five Model of Personality comprising of surgency/extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability vs. neuroticism, and intellect dimensions (Goldberg, 1990; John, 1990 in Church et al, 2000).

Church, Katigbak and Reyes' study on the generality of some Filipino indigenous traits appears to be the only study conducted outside of the US and Europe that was based on a comprehensive taxonomy of personality trait adjectives (Church et al, 1999).

Their study showed that Filipino trait dimensions of gregariousness, concern for others vs. egotism, conscientiousness, self-assurance and intellect overlap with and have significant correlation to the Big Five Personality dimensions. The research has shown global equivalence of certain Filipino traits, which in turn, may possibly explain the cross-cultural competence of OFWs in addition to their migratory adaptability to improve their socio-economic status.

In an earlier study, Benfari (1997) showed that personality types aside from other popularly known factors (e.g. upbringing or family atmosphere, family career aspirations, educational background, training and experience) influence a person's management style as well as explain its uniqueness. On a deeper level, researches on the relationship between personality and brain function hypothesize that personality traits are a function of the quadrant of the brain that is dominantly used (Hermann, 1996).

Management brand

Studies proved that Filipinos possess cultural personal traits that have global equivalence (Church, Katigbak and Reyes, 1999). These traits form part of a brand of management that Filipino managers can use to their advantage. In fact, studies have shown that there are certain Filipino work values that can propel employees to higher levels of performance in the midst of crises as well as in facilitating organizational change. These Filipino work values are *kaugnayan* (identity), *karangalan* (pride), and *katapatan* (commitment). These trait values are predicted to underlie corporate productivity and excellence in the Filipino workplace (Jocano, 1999).

Kaugnayan refers to a sense of 'belongingness' in a group that involves structuring of the status of individuals and defining the need for a strong sense of role identity in a group.

Karangalan refers to the experience of identifying with the company's products and services that have led to a sense of "pride" or a sense of "belongingness" in a group that ultimately enhances confidence in the company. If employees are proud of the company, they would not do anything to destroy it.

All these lead to the experience of the work value *katapatan* or commitment, which involves a sense of oneness and faith in the corporation that could be transformed into the experience of *malasakit* translated as "feeling the pain or troubles together as a group." The spirit of commitment recognizes the hard realities of striving for excellence while confidently asserting that "tough times do not last but tough people do." (Jocano, 1997). Commitment serves as the impetus for teamwork, discipline and responsibility.

Big Five/ Global Personality Scales	Filipino Personality Equivalent
Extraversion	Gregariousness—talkative, cheerful, gregarious and playful as opposed to shy and serious; Self-assurance— strong-willed, brave, resolute and decisive
Agreeableness	Concern for others versus egotism— other-oriented compassionate and loving, kind and generous versus selfish, egotistical and domineering
Conscientousness	Conscientousness—discipline, industriousness, religious, organized and thrifty, Self-assurance,—determination, persistence
Neuroticism	Temperamentalness—moody, ill-tempered and irritable
Intellect or openness to experience	Intelligent, competent and talented

Decision-making system

Coupled with the Filipino work values mentioned earlier, Filipino managers have a traditional way of information gathering and decision-making in responding to business issues. The traditional communication style is composed of three steps, namely: *pagsasangguni* (consultation); *paghihikayat* (persuasion), and *pagkakasundo* (consensus). This would ultimately let the work team to experience *paguugnayan* or understanding (Jocano, 1999).

Pagsasangguni occurs when every person in the group is encouraged to be actively involved in participating in the discussion of the business issue under consideration. The manager who acts as facilitator is then able to establish an intuitive feel of the business situation. Most Filipino managers prefer this practice because it makes them feel part of the bigger group. It also makes them feel respected for their knowledge shared and familiarity with the problem situation (Jocano, 1999).

Paghihikayat, which involves modeling certain techniques desired to produce business outcomes, is also practiced during coaching sessions. During these sessions, the facilitator needs to be skilled in setting a conducive atmosphere that will create appropriate feelings that appeal to the values, emotions, and conscience of group members (Jocano, 1999).

Pagkakasundo, which literally means to agree or go along with the judgment of the group after considering other alternatives, is the highest level of communication where the group is ready to act on game plans they have initially formulated and have finally owned and committed to perform (Gonzales, 1987 & Jocano, 1999).

In summary, the above culture-based studies have shown that Filipino indigenous intrapersonal elements may strongly account for the migratory competence and global adaptability of OFWs whose salary remittances to the Philippines are the highest source of foreign exchange.

(To be continued)

(The author is the deputy program director of the Master of Science in Management in the University of Asia and the Pacific School of Management (UA&P SMN). The article is an excerpt of her paper delivered at the 2003 Leadership Workshop for HR Professionals at the Technical University of Schmalkalden in Thuringia, East Germany. It focuses on the deep, underlying factors that contribute to the global adaptability and cultural competence of OFWs).

SAMIE Lim and Alegria Limjoco, chair and president of the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA), respectively, receive the 11th Kalakbay Awards from Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon in a ceremony held at the Philippine International Convention Center. The PFA won the Kalakbay Award-Event of the Year (exhibition) for Franchise Asia 2001 which was held at the World Trade Center in September 2001.

ABS-CBN to settle ₱1.9B in maturing debt next year

By Doris C. Dumlao

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., which has benefited from robust advertising spending this year, is set to retire P1.9 billion worth of maturing debts next year.

The move would reduce the company's debt level to about P4 billion.

ABS-CBN chief finance officer Randolp Estrellado told reporters Thursday night that the broadcasting giant was fully hedged against debts falling due next year. This was despite the deferral of its planned $150-million global bond float.

As of end-September this year, the company's debt stood at about P6 billion, which is expected to go down to P5.8 billion by the end of the year.

Estrellado said that despite the deferral of the global bond float, the company could still finance maturing debts as well as capital expenditure using internally generated cash.

"The bond float was simply intended to broaden our sources of funding," Estrellado said.

The company has indefinitely deferred its $150-million global bond float to avoid paying higher risk premium amidst recent unfavorable domestic events which caused jitters among investors.

Portion of the offering's proceeds was intended for use by ABS-CBN as its contribution to the equity call of Beyond Cable, the surviving company of the Sky Vision-Home Cable.

For next year, the company plans to spend about P1.5 billion for its capital outlays, including the acquisition of film rights.

ABS-CBN's cash reserve stood at P1.6 billion as of end-September.

Analysts agreed that with the company's operating income of about P3.5 billion, it could finance its capital expenditures and maturing debts next year without resorting to additional borrowing.

For the first nine months of the year, ABS-CBN reported a net profit of P888.8 million.

For the third quarter alone, the net income surged by 131 percent to P381.8 million from a year ago. The company's solid performance was attributed to the continued recovery of advertising spending, the steady expansion of international revenue and the controlled and managed growth of operating expenses.

Consolidated net revenue for the nine-month period reached P9.67 billion, up by 24 percent from last year. Airtime and other broadcast-related revenue expanded by 20 percent to P8.48 billion primarily due to the growth in advertising minutes.

Operating expenses grew at a slower pace of 17 percent to P7.79 billion. The growth in operating expenses was due to the programming changes implemented in the fourth quarter of 2002 and the start-up expenses associated with ABS-CBN Europe.

Security Bank notes get healthy rating

INTERNATIONAL rating agency Fitch Ratings has assigned Security Bank Corp.'s P2.5 billion worth of tier 2 notes a "BB-" rating reflecting the bank's healthy financial condition.

The London-based agency has also assigned the bank's long-term foreign and local currency ratings a "BB" rating indicating a stable outlook that is at par with sovereign ratings.

Security Bank is among the country's 10 biggest banks in terms of total assets, deposits, loans and capital.

The bank generated a 9.74-percent return on equity as of June this year, pushing its rank to No. 6 among the top 10 private domestic commercial banks in the country.

The bank has a non-performing loan ratio of 12.7 percent, lower than the industry average of 15.2 percent. Its NPL cover, at 56 percent, is also better than the industry average of 50.6 percent.

Security Bank is raising over P2.5 billion in tier 2 capital to improve its earnings and place it in a position where it can expand its businesses.

Thrift banks' bad loans level going down

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BAD loans of the country's more than 100 thrift banks improved to 12.71 percent of their total loan portfolio as of September, from 12.82 percent in the previous month, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

The thrift banks' non-performing loans rose by 1.1 percent to P19.62 billion. Their total loans grew by 2 percent to P154.45 billion. During the same period, the ratio of NPL to total loans of commercial banks also slid to 14.49 percent, from 14.95 percent in August.

The bad loans or NPLs are accounts whose principal or interests remained unpaid for at least 90 straight days. A year ago, the bad loans ratio of the smaller banks stood at 13.04 percent.

The thrift banks have continued foreclosing pieces of collateral backing delinquent loans. The thrift banks' level of real and other properties owned or acquired went up by P530 million to P26.73 billion.

The NPL coverage ratio of thrift banks also improved in September to 38.69 percent from 38.25 percent as loan loss reserves grew by 2.3 percent to P7.59 billion even as the level of bad loans also increased.

The coverage ratio tells whether banks have enough reserves to cover defaults. A higher coverage ratio indicates a more prudent banking strategy.

The coverage ratio for non-performing assets also went up to 19.74 percent from 19.61 percent in August.

Despite this, monetary authorities are still worried that banks have not been taking full advantage of the Special Purpose Vehicle Act to reduce their bad loans and foreclosed assets.

The SPV law that provides tax incentives to NPL take-outs will expire after April 2005.

As of the third quarter, 12 out of 41 commercial banks posted NPL ratios above the industry average. More notable were that of Philippine National Bank at 50 percent of total loans, Prudential Bank at 38.26 percent, Philippine Bank of Communications at 28.26 percent and Bank of Commerce at 27.68 percent.

RP plans to import 945,000 MT of rice

THE COUNTRY is planning to import up to 945,000 tons of rice next year for buffer stocks, officials said on Friday.

A government panel that sets the amount of rice imports each year recommended 600,000 tons be bought by state trader National Food Authority (NFA) and 345,000 tons by private firms and farmers' groups, a government source told reporters.

Earlier yesterday, Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo told a news conference that he had approved the importation by the NFA of 600,000 tons of rice for next year's buffer stocks.

The NFA was just waiting for the go-ahead from President Macapagal-Arroyo to launch tenders, he said, adding that the rice should be delivered as soon as possible before the country's election next May.

"It may have to come sometime soon because we understand historically that (during) election time, there is a higher purchase of food products," Lorenzo said.

Some politicians distribute rice and other food products during campaign sorties to woo voters in rural areas.

Private firms and farmers' groups may also be allowed to bring in rice from overseas as long as they pay the tariffs, Lorenzo said.

"We still have in our hands the possibility of allowing increased imports," he said.

This year, the government allowed private firms and farmers' groups to bring in 229,000 tons of the country's total imports of 934,000 tons as part of efforts to dismantle the NFA's monopoly on rice imports.

The NFA brought in 646,000 tons this year, with another 22,000 tons given by the US government and 37,000 tons extended by Washington under a commodity loan. *Reuters*

New registration system for imported vehicles OKd

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT and the local automotive industry have signed a memorandum of agreement addressing the problems that cause delays in the registration of imported vehicles with the Land Transportation Office.

The organizations and government agencies that signed the MOA included the LTO, the Bureau of Customs, the Traffic Management Group, the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. and the Truck Manufacturers Association.

The agreement will cut down to about five days, from several months, the process of registering imported new vehicles with the LTO.

Under the existing system, the process of registering an imported vehicle calls for the submission of the official copy of the certificate of of payment from the Bureau of Customs.

The MOA provides that the official copy from the Customs is no longer necessary and that the importer's copy of the certificate of payment of duties and taxes is an acceptable document for imported vehicle registration.

Also, the MOA states that original copies of the certificate of payment will be sent by the BOC to the LTO within five working days.

Homer Maranan, secretary general of Campi, said the allowed five-working day period for the submission of the certificate of registration to the LTO indicated a significant improvement from the present system which takes several months.

The MOA covers the registration of automobiles and trucks imported as completely knocked down or completely built up units by participants of the government's Motor Vehicle Development Program, which is administered by the Board of Investments.

This tasks both Campi and TMA to regularly update concerned government agencies of the list of duly registered MVDP participants.

Campi and TMA said in a joint statement that the MOA would minimize, if not totally eliminate, the number of motor vehicles without license plates.

"It will also provide a great relief to owners/buyers of new motor vehicles because it will lessen their waiting time for the registration of their vehicles," said the two groups.

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Rice research funds getting smaller

BIOTECH companies are muscling in on rice research as donor funds for studies on what is possibly the planet's most important crop are dwindling, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) officials say.

The sequencing of the rice genome recently not only opened up the largely untapped commercial possibilities of the tiny cereal but also set the pace for potential intellectual property rights disputes between corporate entities and governments.

"The advent of biotechnology has caused a spurt in patents on gene products associated with rice," said IRRI director Ronald Cantrell.

IRRI was founded in Los Baños, Laguna in 1960 to conduct cutting-edge research to boost yields and raise pest resistance of tropical rice varieties.

Rice is the staple food of half of mankind but compared to wheat or corn, rice patents comprise "a very small percentage" among the cereals, Cantrell said.

IRRI holds in trust for humanity an invaluable gene bank of more than 100,000 rice varieties which are held in deep freeze in a laboratory. It distributes the seeds globally for research on the condition that the users do not take out patents on them.

N. R. Sackville Hamilton, head of the IRRI gene bank, recalled a 1995 flap caused by the inadvertent dispatch of jasmine rice seeds to the United States, which sparked fears Thailand's valuable export trade in the aromatic grains would be ruined.

The recipients later agreed not to take out patents on the grains.

"Ten to 15 years ago, we did not worry about it. That's not true now," Cantrell said.

Scientific breakthroughs and private sector involvement are occurring amid declining funding for agricultural research in general, which could pose a long-term threat to the effort to keep food production in step with the rising global population.

Smaller funds

Cantrell was forced to cut staffing by 25 percent last year after slowing donor funds reduced the IRRI's annual budget to $28 million this year.

"Obviously we've had a reduction in output. We can't do as much as we were doing three years ago," he said.

Unlike wheat and corn where private firms do the bulk of research and development, the public sector has accounted for most of the technological advances in rice production with the possible exception of pesticides, fertilizer and harvest equipment, he added.

More private sector research

The trend may be about to change. A US company, DuPont, is among private entities involved in the development of "golden rice," genetically modified grains fortified with Vitamin A, Vitamin B3, iron and other essential micronutrients.

In the biotech field, "a lot of the slickest and most important stuff (is) coming out from the private sector. That's all going to be owned by the private sector. I think that's a loss," Cantrell said.

Cantrell said rice yields would have to rise at least one percent annually over the next 20-30 years to keep up with an expanding population that would reduce arable land and pinch water supplies.

Rice farming now uses up 37.5 percent of Asia's available fresh water.

AFP

WILL rice research soon be monopolized by private firms? Experts warn that it could pose a threat to efforts to increase food production worldwide. PDI FILE PHOTO

Math education: student learning

(Conclusion)

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

FOR THE PAST two weeks we looked at indigenous math practices and creative teaching strategies in the country, which were presented in the Philippine Council for Mathematics Teacher Educators (Mathted) Inc. biennial conference "Mathematics Education in the Philippines."

Student learning has been the focus of much research.

- "Students' Private Talks in a Math Classroom" (Florenda Gallos, National Institute for Science and Math Education Development, UP Nismed). Through students' questions in class, Dr. Gallos studied how discourse influenced learning.
- "Noncognitive Variables and Their Impact on Learning Mathematics: Repeaters Versus Nonrepeaters in College Algebra" (Maxima Acelajado, De La Salle University Manila). Dr. Acelajado discovered that repeaters and non-repeaters differed significantly in three noncognitive variables: attitudes in math, self-regulation skills (attention and concentration, and time spent on task) and confidence.

Enjoying learning

- "The Influence of Portfolio Assessment on Student Achievement in Basic College Math" (Zita Dales and Charita Luna, Bukidnon State College). "Students assessed by portfolio feel less anxious about learning math, devote considerable time in studying the lesson, and enjoy the learning experience."
- "An Exploratory Investigation of Student Math Thinking in Trigonometry" (Auxencia Limjap, DLSU-Manila). In trigo class, cognitive task demands were related to performance categories. There was "wide variation of performance among the average and below-average students, manifested in solution strategies, levels of performance, and epistemic actions, and a relatively stable performance among the above average students."

Using the Internet

- Nonroutine Problem Solving Using a Web-Based Resource: Math Communication in a Social Constructivist Learning Environment" (Ma. Concepcion Molano-Cachero, DLSU, Manila). "Students engaged in mathematical communication where the classroom became a community of learning and collaboration. The use of a Web-based resource as a tool increased their abilities to assume an open orientation to a problem as they looked at problems from different perspectives and reflected upon them."
- "Effecting Change in Student Skills in Analyzing Math Situations" (Teresita Mañalac, UP Nismed). The study identified student skills required for analyzing situations, such as representing, identifying components and attributes, identifying relationships and patterns, identifying main ideas, identifying errors, interpreting and inferring. Teaching students strategies enhanced their performance.
- "Student Problem Solving Performance in a Think-Pair-Share (TPS) Environment" (Carlos Asuncion Pangilinan Jr., Mapua Institute of Technology). Instead of the usual lectures, students "were given time to reflect individually on the problem and discuss the solution with a pair for possible compromise or negotiation of his idea." Although scores did not improve significantly, there was some improvement. "Students were able to communicate their ideas well while their teacher was able to assess their math understanding."
- "Effects of Teaching Estimation Strategies on Student Quantitative Judgment and Problem Solving Ability" (Aida Yap, UP Nismed). "Exposing pupils to the different estimation strategies develops in them a more favorable attitude toward the use of estimation in dealing with problem situations."

Higher-thinking skills

- "Instruction-Related Contexts and Student Math Achievement in First Year High School" (Arlene Bachinela, Cebu Normal University). Central Visayas performed best during the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). What was the learning environment? The curriculum was SEDP-based, with attention on mastery of computational skills rather than higher-thinking skills. Teachers dominated instruction. Knowledge rather than application was stressed, and instruction was assessed by quizzes, periodical exams and division tests.

Perhaps this lack of higher-order thinking accounted for the fact that even if that region did well in the TIMSS, the Philippine contingent did very poorly as a whole, compared to other countries.

Feeling no pain

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

I REMEMBER walking into a professor's lab in college and seeing a journal's cover photo of a mouse on top of a chili pepper. That was when capsaicin became an important word in pain relief.

Known in the food industry as the chemical that makes peppers so hot, studies found that it could actually reduce nerve pain by numbing the nerve endings.

Many topical ointments now include capsaicin in their formulas and the cool burning sensation that comes from applying it usually precedes the reduction if not complete absence of pain in the injured area.

Pain relief is big business, which is why there are so many products in the market that claim to alleviate pain, eradicate pain, and most importantly, remove any scars.

I usually discover cuts on my hands only when soap gets into the wound as I wash my hands. That makes for a handy excuse not to wash the dishes, but still, there are times when I wish I didn't feel the sting of all those cuts. I mean, why can't we have higher pain tolerance, like, say, the naked mole-rats of East Africa?

Mole-rats not cute

If you've heard of naked mole-rats, chances are it was because of Ron's pet Rufus on Disney's "Kim Possible" series. Unfortunately, they don't look that cute in real life, and they don't sound like Bart Simpson either.

Ever seen a newborn puppy, so small it fits in the palm of your hand, with its eyes still closed and its skin completely wrinkled, pinkish and hairless? Now imagine hundreds of those newborn puppies stinkily moving around some underground tunnel system in certain parts of Africa.

That's what naked mole-rats are like, and they're neither moles nor rats to boot.

The naked mole-rats of East Africa have been brought to the attention of medical researchers because they don't feel pain the way other mammals do.

Their genetic makeup doesn't include a neurotransmitter called Substance P, a chemical that helps send messages of pain to the central nervous system. Because the pain message doesn't get through, the animals don't react immediately if their skin get cut or exposed to heat as they make their way around.

Some medical researchers believe that Substance P causes fibromyalgia, a condition in which patients suffer from chronic pain in their muscles and ligaments and constantly feel tired.

Testing for pain

To test the theory that the absence of Substance P would reduce the patients' suffering, they decided to do an experiment proving the opposite—to see if giving the naked mole-rats Substance P would make them feel pain. The results of one such study was presented before the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience last month.

The work was conducted by biologist Thomas Park and his colleagues from the biology and anesthesiology departments at the University of Illinois at Chicago, in collaboration with researchers from Albany Medical College in New York and the University of South Carolina School of Medicine.

To get Substance P into the naked mole-rats, a virus which contained the genetic sequence for Substance P was first applied to their feet, carrying the chemical's DNA through the skin to a location near the spinal cord. Once Substance P had become part of the mole-rats' genetic makeup, scientists anesthetized the rodents' feet and placed them close enough to heat lamps that they would complain about the warmth but wouldn't go up in flames.

Sensitivity to pain

If you hold your finger about an inch above the flame of a candle, you find yourself pulling your finger away from the heat immediately. The naked mole-rats that had Substance P in their systems did the same thing as soon as their feet were placed near the heat lamps; those that served as controls in the experiment took more time to move away.

"We expected that Substance P could restore some sensitivity to painful stimuli," Professor Park said later, "but it was a real surprise that this single chemical could make the naked mole-rats behave just like other animals."

Knowing now that Substance P is responsible for allowing pain signals to make their way from the injured area to the brain, will researchers be able to help sufferers of fibromyalgia and other people with chronic pain?

That remains to be seen as there isn't enough information gathered yet. In the meantime, pain-signaling pathways continue to be mapped with the hope of finding more ways of interfering with the message.

Next week's column will look at a Canadian company's plan to alleviate pain by using the same toxins that make the fugu fish such a deadly delicacy.

Hold sweets for special occasions

By Charles E. Buban

ALTHOUGH sugary foods taste good and feel like a special treat, it is important to keep them as just that—an occasional, special treat. That's because these types of food—bread, soft drinks, ice cream, chocolate, cakes and pies—are concentrated sources of energy and, like fats, do not have a "healthy" reputation.

Sugary foods that often go hand in hand with fatty foods have been linked to an increased risk of having coronary heart disease. They also aggravate complications related to diabetes.

Not for diabetics

"These types (fatty and sugary) of foods are not advised for diabetics since they need to control their blood sugar and avoid complications," says Dr. Gary Sy, medical director of Life Extension Medical Center.

Diabetics need to watch their diet, and they have to consult their doctors or dieticians on the type and amount of food they require. This is specially true for people diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, or what is commonly known as adult-onset diabetes.

Says Sy: "The person with this type of diabetes has to reduce his intake of sugar because his body doesn't use the naturally occurring insulin that helps in the absorption of sugar. The sugar he eats goes around to the various organs, especially the kidney and eyes, and destroys tissue."

Reducing craving

Sy advises his diabetic patients to take a dietary supplement called Diabetrol that, he says, may go hand in hand with the prescribed medication.

Diabetrol reduces one's craving for sweets, unlike other supplements that simply help lower the existing high blood sugar in the body, he explains.

The herbal supplement contains minerals GTF (glucose tolerance factor) chromium and magnesium, and herbs like *Eugenia jambolana* (jambul), *Mamordica charantia* (bitter melon), *Trigonella foenum* (fenugreek seeds) and *Gymnema sylvestre* (gumar). They help slow down the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream.

"The gumar is particularly remarkable. Its active ingredient is known as gymnemic acid, which interferes with the taste buds' ability to detect sweetness. This explains its Hindi name, which means 'destroyer of sugar,'" Sy says.

Cut down on sugary foods

To cut down on sugary and fatty foods, Sy gives the following suggestions:

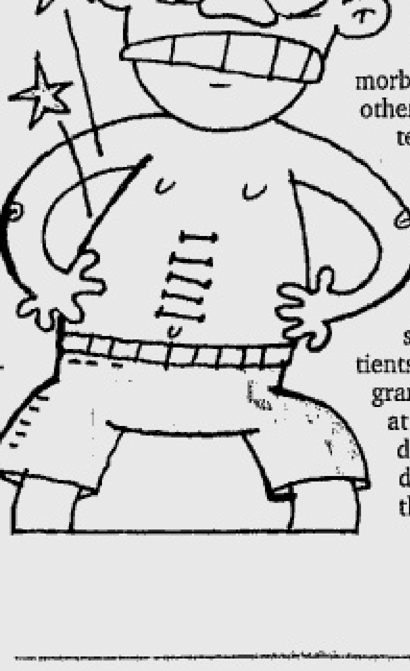
- Snack on fresh or dried fruit rather than biscuits and chocolate.
- Switch to vegetable oil and low fat spreads.
- Buy lean cuts of meat and reduced-fat minces.
- Try poaching, steaming, grilling and baking.
- Swap whole milk for semi-skimmed or skimmed.

Exercise is still best

"I also tell my patients to exercise regularly as it stimulates the cells that absorb the glucose in the body," he says.

Sy adds that exercise can take many forms—from walking the dog, to parking farther from the store in the parking lot, to chair aerobics often demonstrated on television.

Experts raise alarm over stapled stomach surgery



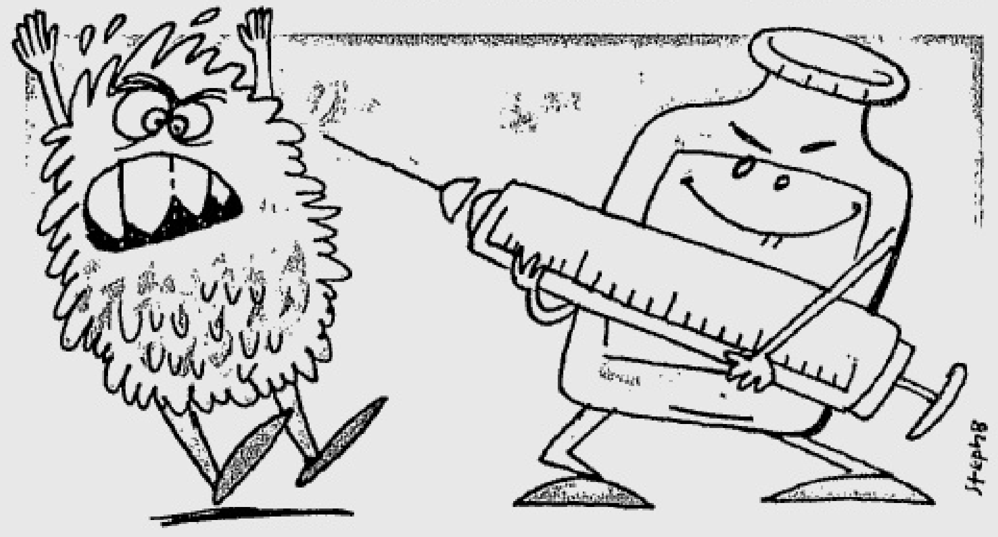
THE STAPLED stomach, a radical and popular treatment for obesity in the United States, poses numerous dangers for the patient. A study among 335 patients in Cleveland revealed two deaths within 30 days of the surgery and identified 57 complications due to the operations. These complications include leaks from poor healing, pulmonary embolisms and infections.

The study looked at Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, the most popular surgery to combat fat. The upper stomach is stapled to reduce its capacity.

The researchers said the stapled stomach should not be considered a cosmetic procedure and should be the last option doctors can offer the morbidly obese, after other less invasive interventions such as diet and exercise have been tried.

The surgery is generally considered for patients who are 45 kilograms overweight or at risk form type-2 diabetes or heart disease because of the excess weight.

AFP



Prevent liver cancer through hepa vaccine

By Tessa R. Salazar

LIVER cancer has been removed from the list of top 10 cancer killers in developed countries, thanks to Hepatitis B vaccines that stop the disease in its tracks. Sadly, however, liver cancer is still among the three top killer cancers in the Philippines.

It is also the third leading cancer site for both sexes, and ranks second among males and ninth among females. In 1998, 5,249 new liver cancer cases and 4,403 deaths were recorded.

Data from the Philippine Cancer Society (PCS) data show that one priority public health program of the Department of Health is the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI). All infants are supposed to receive one dose of Bacillus Calmette Guerin (BCG), three doses of diphtheria pertussis, tetanus (DPT), three doses of oral polio vaccine (OPV) and one dose of the measles vaccine.

The three doses of Hepatitis B vaccine that must be given preferably before the infants' first birthday is only included in the EPI if supply is available.

Required by law

In 1994, Republic Act 7846 was passed requiring Hepatitis B immunization for infants and children below 8. That year, the target was to immunize 40 percent of the infant population and to increase the coverage every year until 100 percent of the infant population had been vaccinated.

For 2003, the DOH was able to purchase P26-million worth of Hepatitis B vaccines for 60 percent of the target population.

The total budget for EPI is P319 million. Of this amount, P299 million goes to purchasing the vaccines, and the rest covers the cost of freight and handling.

The vaccines are distributed to the different regions through the regional health offices, and the EPI coordinators in the region allocate the vaccines to the provinces and cities, down to the municipal and barangay levels.

Causal relationship

The PCS said studies point to a causal relationship between Hepatitis B virus and liver cancer. Primary liver cancer is much more common in countries where HBV carriers are prevalent, such as in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries, compared to developed countries where Hepatitis B is less prevalent.

Hepatitis C infection, although less prevalent, can also lead to liver cancer.

Other factors implicated are alcohol consumption, prolonged heavy intake of aflatoxin and other chemical carcinogens.

Public health experts say emphasis should be toward prevention, by lowering the prevalence of Hepatitis B through infant vaccination and improving sanitation nationwide.

Enjoying the holidays minus extra pounds

MEDICAL FILES

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

THE SEASON for parties is here. This means good food, drinks and late nights. Enjoyable as it may seem, it is also the most fattening time of the year.

After a Christmas feast repeated many times over with friends and relatives and absence in the gym or skipping exercises because of one's hectic schedule, we gain unwanted extra pounds.

Healthy eating means not only counting the calories, but also watching the types of food we eat.

Nutrition experts say we have four major types of fat: saturated, polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and trans fats.

Saturated fat, contained in animal meat especially red meat and whole-fat dairy products, is the worst of fats. It elevates bad cholesterol, and makes the blood vessels and the entire body age prematurely.

Trans fat, also called "hidden fat," is contained in many fast-food meals and packaged foods such as cookies, crackers and potato chips. It is created when unsaturated fats are hydrogenated (combined with hydrogen). This type of fat is also not healthy and is believed to be just as bad as saturated fat.

Good cholesterol

Unsaturated fat (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated), which is found in vegetable and fruit oils, remains liquid at room temperature, unlike saturated fat which solidifies in cool temperature or even just at room temperature. These fats may supply the fat our body needs for metabolism. This is the good type of cholesterol.

To remember the four types of fats and which ones to avoid, world renowned nutrition expert Dr. Michael Roizen proposes a memory aid: S in saturated fat means "stay away"; T in trans fat is "terrible"; P in polyunsturated is "passable"; and M in monounsaturated fat stands for "moderation."

Beware of some drugs

Dietary discretion and exercise are still the best ways to prevent getting those unwanted pounds. But if these are not adequate, taking some medicines may be necessary.

Appetite suppressants may help, but some may have a lot of side effects such as palpitations, elevation of the blood pressure, insomnia and irritability. Beware of unscrupulous weight-reducing clinics which claim that you can eat all the food you like and then prescribe an overdose of these appetite suppressants. The endorsement of these clinics by movie stars and other celebrities is no guarantee that their weight-reducing prescriptions are medically sound.

One relatively safe medicine which helps prevent the absorption of saturated fats is orlistat (Xenical).

I just received some scientific literature about a four-year study by Prof. Lars Sjöström and his colleagues on the benefits of orlistat that was presented before the 9th International Congress on Obesity (ICO) in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Known as Xendos, the study involved 3,304 patients and showed that short- and long-term weight loss was significantly greater with orlistat plus lifestyle intervention (diet and exercise) compared with lifestyle intervention alone.

Prevents diabetes, CVD

The study also showed that the risk of developing type 2 diabetes was 37 percent lower in people treated with orlistat plus lifestyle intervention compared with lifestyle intervention alone.

It is also notable that orlistat-treated patients had significant, sustained, long-term improvements in cardiovascular risk factors such as blood pressure and cholesterol profiles compared with lifestyle intervention alone.

"Against the background of several studies which show lifestyle intervention [to be successful] in the prevention of diabetes, it is a significant step forward to be able to show that treatment with orlistat in combination with lifestyle modification is more effective than lifestyle intervention alone both in diabetes prevention and weight loss," said Professor Sjöström.

Drugs like orlistat work in the digestive system by blocking about one-third of the fat from being digested. The undigested fat is quickly eliminated through bowel movement.

Orlistat may be a good option for those who can't resist rich foods during the holidays. But no amount of good medicine can be a better substitute to diet and exercise in keeping slim.

Nutrition program makes a difference

YOUNG minds need good food to perform their best. What's better than giving them milk—the nearly perfected food—as source of nourishment?

Research studies have proven the link between good nutrition and learning ability. Kids do better in school when they are well fed. In contrast, undernourished children do not only have reduced learning ability, they are also more prone to infection and other illnesses.

An estimated 140,000 public schoolchildren from 312 schools in 26 districts in Camariness Sur have been getting their daily ration of milk and biscuits under the School Nutrition Program which began full blast in September this year.

The SNP is made possible through a commodity donation from the US Department of Agriculture. It is being implemented and managed by Land O' Lakes Foundation Philippines in cooperation with the interagency milk feeding committee, composed of the National Dairy Authority, Department of Health-Bureau of Food and Drugs, and the National Nutrition Council. The SNP serves these kids daily with 200-ml ultrahigh temperature milk and 40-gram nutritious biscuits.

Land O' Lakes Foundation Philippines chose Camarines Sur for the nutrition program based on a study on malnutrition among schoolchildren and one of the country's lowest elementary survival rates.

ASK THE DENTIST

Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Denture stains

MY DENTURES have black stubborn stains that won't come off by brushing. I tried using denture tablets but the stains are still there. What can I do? Can my dentist help me?

—Gerry D.

When my patient has stubborn stains on his dentures, I usually send it to the lab for cleaning. But some patients cannot have this procedure because they do not have an extra set of dentures. For them I suggest a powerful stain remover for dentures called Kleenite. It's a powder that you add to water just enough to immerse your dentures; the next day the stains are virtually gone. Do it again another night and the stains are history.

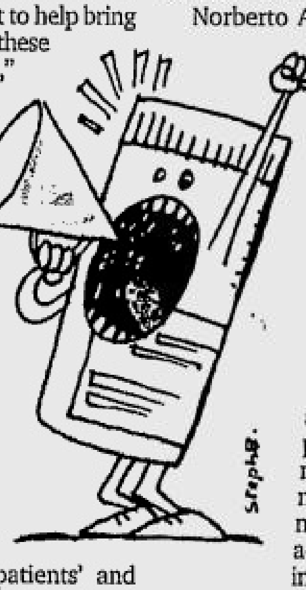
If your dentures have metal then you should use Stain Away which is used the same way and is equally effective.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

Advocacy heeding the call for affordable medicines

"WE'RE just heeding the patients' and doctors' call."

Such was the main reason given by Unilab executives as they reaffirmed their commitment in delivering reasonably priced but affordable medicines particularly for essential products. "The doctors' and patients' response have been very encouraging and motivates us to continue our commitment to help bring down the prices of these important products," says James Dio, general manager of Therapharma, one of the divisions of Unilab.



"We want to reassure patients that we're listening when they ask us to bring down as best as we can the prices of frequently used pharmaceutical products," says Dio. He adds that the entire management of Unilab has enjoined all its divisions to heed the patients' and doctors' call and to take this seriously as an advocacy they should fight for on behalf of the patients and doctors.

Unilab and Therapharma hosted a series of modest celebrations to show their gratitude to doctors for their overwhelming support to the company's Heath Plus Value Program (HPVP), which gives additional free tablets of the medicines being taken by their patient.

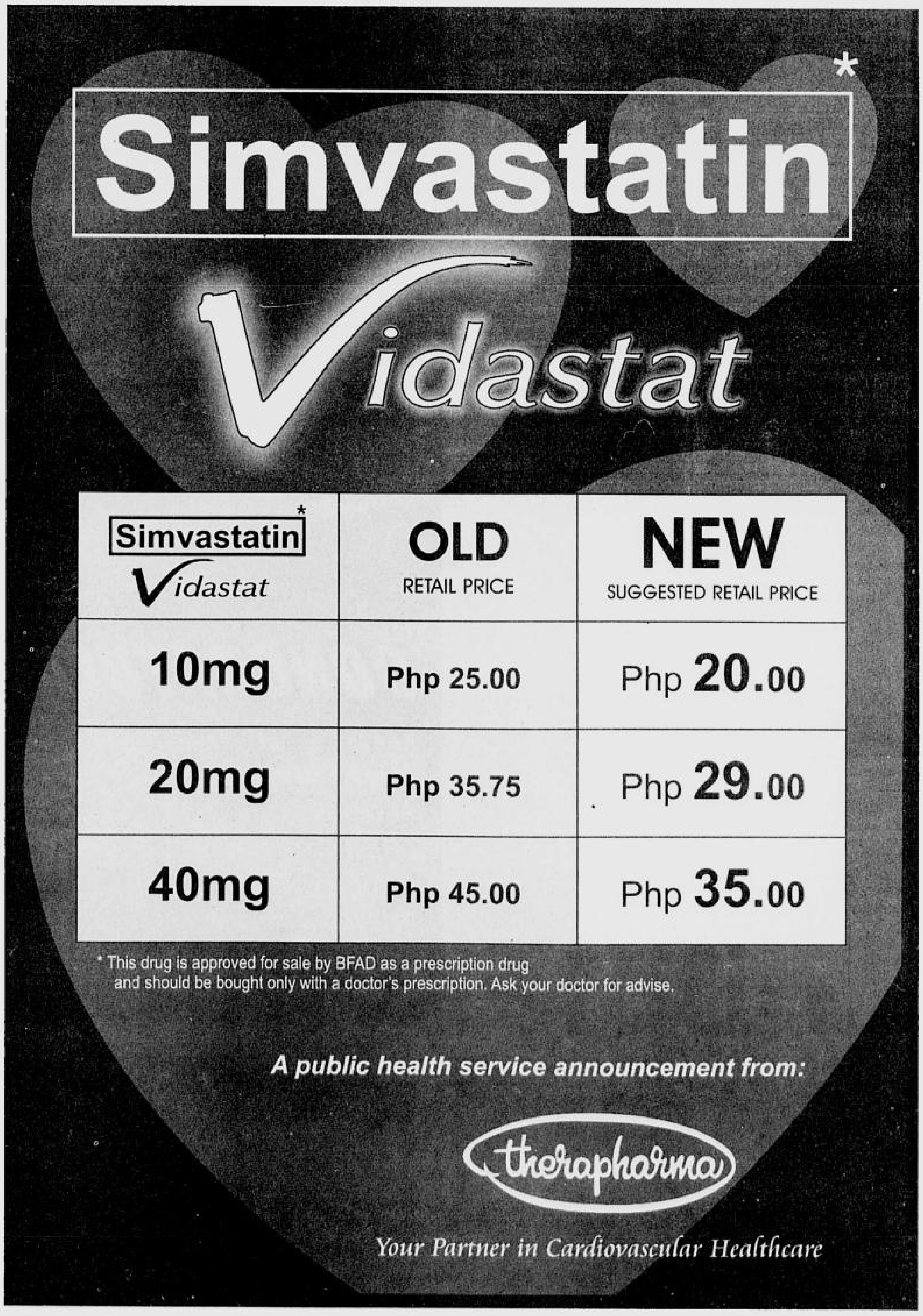
Thousands of patients from all over the country have sent letters thanking the company for their HPVP and other programs assisting patients. Alejandra Capitan of Metro Manila writes: "I am a poor woman, a senior citizen and I cannot afford to buy the medicines at one time. I will be waiting for the free tablets by mail. Thank you Therapharma very much."

Thelma Villa writes from Bacolod City expressing the gratitude to Dr. Wilson Glen Loire, her personal physician who has diligently taken care of her and who introduced the HPVP to her.

Norberto Aquino of Poblacion Pura, Tarlac, sends a short message saying: *"Gusto ko pong magpasalamat sa mga libreng tableta na natanggap ko na. Sana mapadalhan nyo pa po ako ulit. Maraming salamat po!"*

Because of an advice from the regulatory authorities arising from complaints of other pharmaceutical companies, the HPVP will now be discontinued according to Dio, but in its place, the discounts will be directly integrated in the prices of their simvastatin preparations so more patients can readily avail of the lower prices.

Although health practitioners attribute to Unilab and Therapharma the decision by several multinational companies to lower the prices of cholesterol-lowering drugs, Dio says that the doctors and patients made it happen. "We were just used as an instrument," he says. He hopes that the same thing can happen in other drug segments such as in medicines for high blood pressure, diabetes, lung diseases and other chronic medical problems requiring long-term and sustained treatment.



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WTO chief asks G-20 to show flexibility at Brasilia meeting

BRASILIA—World Trade Organization (WTO) chief Supachai Panitchpakdi Thursday urged developing countries of the G-20 group to demonstrate flexibility on agricultural issues when they meet here Friday.

"We need signs of flexibility, otherwise people won't move in Geneva," said Supachai, referring to WTO headquarters.

"Even if it is in small areas in Singapore, in domestic supports for agriculture, in market access. That will be my clear message tomorrow."

The last round of WTO trade talks, in Cancun, Mexico, last September, broke down after G-20 members refused to discuss the so-called "Singapore issues" of investment, competition, government spending and trade accommodation on which the industrialized nations had insisted.

Supachai told reporters he would particularly stress flexibility on agriculture Friday "because people here are more interested in agriculture."

"When I was in Africa the key for more flexibility was cotton, in Caribbean it was sugar, in Central America it was special treatment for small economies," he said.

Supachai said the WTO would "try to work towards full,. real resumption of our negotiations," but added, to accomplish that, "we need signs from various countries from several parts of the world."

Alluding to the missed Dec. 15 deadline for resumption of WTO talks, Supachai said, "I hope that the ministers will be coming back in negotiations modes as soon as possible after new year."

The Cancun meeting was marked by friction between the WTO's industrialized nations and the G-20 countries led by Brazil.

AFP

IMF, World Bank heads call for trade talks revival

WASHINGTON—The heads of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank made a collective call to governments to revive collapsed world trade talks, saying rich nations should take the lead by reducing barriers and subsidies on agriculture.

The appeal by the IMF's Horst Koehler and World Bank chief James Wolfensohn, published in an op-ed piece in the Financial Times, comes as governments prepare for talks in Geneva next week, following negotiations that broke down over agriculture in Mexico in September.

They said efforts to create a more open global trading system had reached a "critical juncture" with sides still far apart on key issues.

"The risk of the Doha development agenda being put off indefinitely looms larger with each month of inaction," they wrote.

WOLFENSOHN AP

Rich nations should be politically bold and offer to lower and curtail subsidies on cotton, sugar and other agricultural products, they said.

"Electorates must be told that the losses would be far outweighed by gains that would be shared more broadly," Koehler and Wolfensohn pointed out.

In their appeal to developing nations, they said tackling domestic trade barriers and embracing trade should be part of development strategies.

There was growing evidence that countries that are more open to trade grow faster compared to those that remain closed, while growth directly benefits the poor, they noted.

"Taking these actions should not be seen as 'concessions' but steps to promote opportunity and productivity in one's own economy.

"If all governments take these steps together they get the twin benefits of higher productivity and greater market opportunities abroad. The sooner they do so, the better," they wrote. *Reuters*

China driving Asia's economic growth

NEW DELHI, India—China, the world's fastest growing economy, will fuel stronger economic growth throughout Asia next year, though terrorism and a possible recurrence of SARS could dent the region's rebound, the Asian Development Bank said Thursday.

"The world economy ... is now flying with two engines—the United States and China," said Pradumna B. Rana, director of the ADB's Regional Economic Monitoring Unit, in New Delhi.

Economic growth in Southeast Asia, China and South Korea are seen averaging 6.1 percent in 2003, the bank said, adding this will likely accelerate to 6.6 percent next year.

"The main story is we have emerged from a lackluster growth in the first half of 2003 into a synchronized upswing," said Rana.

Meanwhile, India, Asia's other economic behemoth, will grow 6.7 percent this year, compared with 4.3 percent a year ago, the bank said in its latest forecast.

Growth prospects are better largely because of China, where annual economic growth has averaged 7.5 percent since 1995.

In 2003, China is seen recording 8.5 percent growth.

With the economy booming, the Chinese have been going on a spending spree in Asia, driving up intra-regional trade, Rana said.

China's membership to the World Trade Organization has lowered trade barriers, bringing huge benefits to neighbors Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

"Some people say consumer spending is driving growth in these countries, but I say it is just China-driven," Rana said.

Some analysts say Asian economies are relying less on exports, and more on consumer spending.

More than one-third of the growth in gross domestic product of Indonesia and the Philippines in the past 18 months came from consumer spending, the ADB report said.

In Thailand, consumer spending accounted for nearly half of the country's growth.

However, Asian economies still face perils such as terrorism.

"We do not want to overreact. But the reality after 9/11 is we do not know when and where the next attack will take place," Rana said.

Also, he said, medical experts have not ruled out a recurrence of SARS, or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. *AP*

EU, developing nations to clash on subsidies

BRASILIA—The European Union and 20 leading developing nations are set for a new confrontation over farm subsidies at a summit here on Friday.

Ahead of the meeting with the so-called Group of 20, the European Union's Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said he was opposed to a complete end to agriculture subsidies. The G-20 wants to see all subsidies stopped.

"I do not believe that for all countries, and particularly for developing countries, that the total liberalization of agriculture is a good thing," Lamy told the O Globo newspaper published Thursday.

"Agriculture is a specific activity to which market rules that apply to coal, socks or a car, do not apply," Lamy added.

The G-20 led the uprising by poorer nations which brought the World Trade Organization meeting in Cancun to a halt, with farm subsidies one of the key issues of dispute.

The EU trade chief cited as examples slumps in the prices of coffee and cocoa after those markets were liberalized, and said his view was shared by developing countries such as India and Indonesia and countries in Africa.

"I am not alone on this," Lamy stressed.

According to the business newspaper Valor Economico, Brazil is the G-20's top agricultural exporter. It shipped out more than $16 billion in farm products in 2001, more than 20 percent of the current group total.

Lamy argued that no country ought to put such concentration on agriculture.

"It is necessary to find out whether (being competitive in agriculture) amounts to running the risk of winding up with no land that can be farmed in 10 or 20 years, or of degrading the environment," Lamy told O Globo.

"The EU is not the one that has the greatest problem with domestic subsidies to farmers. It is the United States. We are not the ones with more problems related to market access. It is the Japanese," he added.

Lamy added that the EU has one "specific position with regard to export subsidies" and also has general demands: "we want lower industrial tariffs, negotiations on services, clarity on commercial rules and environmental terms, and rigor on anti-dumping rules."

The G-20 will meet in Brazil's federal capital Thursday and Friday to reaffirm its positions for the World Trade Organization council next week in Geneva.

On Friday, the G-20 ministers will hold talks with Lamy to hear EU proposals aimed at jump-starting farm negotiations following the breakdown of talks in Cancun.

There are currently 19 members of the G-20. Fourteen will be present in Brasilia represented by foreign ministers (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay), trade ministers (Cuba, Egypt, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, Venezuela and Zimbabwe) or agriculture minister (South Africa).

China will be represented by its deputy agriculture minister; the Philippines and Mexico by government officials; and Indonesia by its ambassador in Geneva. Thailand so far has not named its representative. *AFP*

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Maria Rosario Tan, 28, *Xavierville Ave., Quezon City*

Racing Jackets

Manila
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Danilo Abaño, 25, *Novaliches, Quezon City*
Ronaldo Abuda, 22, *Bagbaguin, Caloocan City*
Kristine Acos-Roa, 30, *Sucat, Parañaque*
Arthur Acuña, 33, *Cubao, Quezon City*
Nelia Agravante, 26, *Tondo, Manila*
Rema Alfonso, 31, *P. Celle St., Pasay City*
Jose Alvarez, 41, *Bel-Air, Makati*
Maria Racquel Alvarez, 35, *San Juan, Metro Manila*
Fructuoso Ancheta Jr., 57, *Paco, Manila*
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Julio Brazil, 25, *Paco, Manila*
Danilo Bricia, 42, *FB Harrison St., Pasay City*
Verbalun Carandang, 29, *Malate, Manila*
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Gina Castillo, 44, *B.F., Las Piñas*
Emmanuel Chuasoto, 25, *Brgy. Sta. Lucia, San Juan*
Ranzo Clemente, 42, *Acacia Lane, Mandaluyong*
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Richard Dom
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Mark Espirit
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Josefl Micha
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Nilacor Flore
Glenn Ganue
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Paul Go, 43
Editha Gomu
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Teresa Gozo
Jino Gruneth
Wilfredo Hi
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John Indomn
Dennis Jarle
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Charito Bobon, 34, *Malate, Manila*
Renato Bombita, 26, *Ningan, Malabon*
Salvacion Broncamo, 34, *Lancer, Sun Valley*
Esmeraldo Cabulay, 41, *Asia World City, Parañaque*
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Erwin Camunias, 28, *Tunasan, Muntinlupa*
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Mary Anne Carranceja, 39, *SFDM, Quezon City*
Jason Paul Cariño, 25, *Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa*
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Flordeliz Chapman, 51, *Vito Cruz Ext., Makati*
Allan Chingcuanco, 25, *Alcalde Jose Kapasigan, Pasig City*
Youngil Choi, 30, *Dela Rosa St., Makati*
Kenneth Chow, 27, *Don Manuel St., Quezon City*
Rando Clemente, 42, *Acacia Lane, Mandaluyong*
Ramon Cleofe Jr., 29, *Pateros, Manila*
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Jonathan Dael, 27, *Pilar Village, Las Piñas*
Shiela de Guzman, 25, *Mindanao Ext., Quezon City*
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Michrowel del Rosario, 37, *Clarkfield, Pampanga*
Oscar Demetillo, 45, *Silang, Cavite*
Ferdinand Dilao, 39, *Silang, Cavite*
Ricardo Discipulo, 42, *Veterans Village, Quezon City*
Paolo Doplon, 20, *BF Homes, Las Piñas*

Veronica Do
Maurice Der
Esteban Dy
Ronald Nico
Melchor Ejer
Dennis Anth
Mary Ann En
Lolita Enjam
Rhyner Era
Allan Espelit
Rudolf Espin
Aileen Mae
Claudine Fer
Lino Flores
Jessica Gag
Rodolfo Gag
Bernadette G
Eliasar Gagu
Abelardo Ga
Roland P. Ga
Alpha Celine
Domingo Ga
Mary Joy Gi
Reynaldo Gi
Kenneth Go
Gilbert Gonz
Sabino Jaja
Domingo Jho
Apasha Juns
Antonio Gera
Kim Young K
Marlon Laco
Luz Ladiza
Terry Lao 3
Reynaldo Le
Francisca Li
Ez Ligaya 2
Evelyn Llama
Danilo Lozar
George Lu II
Bernard Mag

Paddock Club Backpack

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Rommel Almerol, 36, *Libis, Quezon City*
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Erwin M. Aranda, 23, *Edsa Ext. Cor. P. Celle St., Pasay City*
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Chock Cruz, 28, *St. Jude, Novaliches*
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Julio Macabiles, 47, *Kapalaran St. Mandaluyong City*
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Marishelle Medina, 33, *Proj. 4, Quezon City*

Eloisa Merc
Mark Andrew
Maricris Nap
Imelda Nool
Aguinaldo E
Maribel Para
Fernando S
Munelle Viss
Reynaldo Ra
Christopher
Romeo San
Jonah N. Va
Alenio Wong
Mark Yap 2

Cebu
Zolico Abreg
Prima Liza C
Jonathan C.

Pit Umbrella

Cebu
Edna Alpas, 30, *Lahug, Cebu City*
Sheila Mae Amores, 30, *Basak Kagunoy, Lapu-Lapu City*
Renato W. Aquino, 41, *MBEAB, Lapu-lapu City*
Ramil Babac, 32, *Labangon, Cebu*
Juny Bendanillo, 26, *Mepz, Lapu-lapu City*
Lourdes Boiser, 34, *Dumlog, Talisay City*
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Reginald Guce, 30, *Capitol, Cebu*
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Benjamin A. Lagala Jr., 29, *KSS Philippines Inc.*

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Ivy P. Pasilang
Jorie E. Puraca
Marilou L. Rom
Miriam Siao 5
Riza Tagalog
Wendel S. Uba
Chona R. Vigua
Ma. Wilda Villa
Jocelyn C. Yap
Corazon Radez
Tommy Po 56
Ramon Y. Pald
Antonietta T. d

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Asia tracks Wall St. rally, gets boost from tankan

SINGAPORE—Most Asian stock markets rallied on Friday as solid Japanese business confidence data and Wall Street's highest close in nearly 19 months spurred buying of exporters such as Japan's Sony Corp.

Japanese government bond (JGB) prices edged higher after the key tankan confidence survey showed big business was at its most confident in six years, although the outlook was more clouded.

Financial bookmakers in London expected Britain's FTSE to open up 18 points higher, Germany's DAX to start 16 points up and France's CAC-40 to begin up 19 points.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index closed up 0.9 percent at 10,169.66, lifted by high-tech exporters such as Canon Inc. and Sony, both up more than one percent. But the Tokyo market was still down nearly 2 percent for the week.

Tokyo Electron climbed 3.5 percent, but Internet firm Softbank Corp. plunged nearly 14 percent after it announced a $2.12-billion share and bond issue.

South Korean shares rallied nearly 2 percent, boosted by blue chips such as Kookmin Bank, which jumped 5.1 percent on a better business outlook.

An MSCI index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan was up more than one percent at 0610 GMT. Most Asian stock markets were up.

"With the rise in New York and the tankan showing a better-than-expected improvement, we are seeing a boost for the market," said Yutaka Miura, deputy manager at Shinko Securities.

But he added: "While the underlying economy is looking solid, companies are not overly optimistic going forward."

The tankan showed the improvement was largely limited to large manufacturers, many of them exporters of high-tech goods, and even their three-month outlook was weaker.

In Hong Kong, the focus was on an IPO of insurer China Life to raise up to $3.03 billion, the world's biggest IPO this year. It is expected to be priced later on Friday.

Minutes from a US Federal Reserve meeting in October that appeared to dim any chance of higher interest rates in 2004, coupled with positive retail sales data and upbeat forecasts on semiconductors, boosted US stocks.

The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 0.9 percent to 10,008.16, its highest close since May 2002. *Reuters*

Japanese bankruptcies at lowest level since 1999

TOKYO—Japanese business failures fell to their lowest monthly level for more than four and a half years in November, a private credit research institute said Friday.

The nation's corporate bankruptcies dropped 20.7 percent from a year earlier to 1,136 cases last month, Teikoku Databank said in a monthly report.

The figure was below 1,200 cases for the first time in 55 months, the institute said.

"The number showed a year-on-year decline for 11 consecutive months, representing a clear sign of downtrend in the number of corporate failures," Teikoku Databank said.

The institute said the decline was mainly due to shrinking credit use, caution among companies to investment and growing government assistance for small- and medium-sized businesses.

Combined liabilities of companies which failed in November, however, rose 75.2 percent to 1.01 trillion yen ($9.35 billion), led by Tsuzuki Spinning Co. Ltd., which collapsed with a debt of 241.8 billion yen.

The institute warned Japan was not out of the woods yet.

"Considering the present situation that risks are being foregone by the policies intended only for life extension of corporations, it does not necessary mean that the critical situation was fundamentally over," it said.

The report, which does not cover financial institutions, did not include regional lender Ashikaga Bank.

It collapsed last month as its debts exceeded assets by 102.3 billion yen in September.

The government placed the insolvent bank under state control on Dec. 1 by injecting public funds into Ashikaga in an effort to "stabilize the nation's financial system." *AFP*

Cebu
Desideria Mahilum, 23, Mandaue City, Cebu
Enrique Pacatang, 36, Pelaez St., Cebu City

Mild Seven Renault F1 Team Mountain Bikes

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Julie Brazil, 24, Paco, Manila
Joel Ceciban, 35, Sampaloc Site II, Parañaque City
Josellio Jara, 34, United Hills Village-I, Parañaque City
Thomas O. Mercado, 28, Fuentebella St., Laginghanda
Guillermo Pelayo, 25, Greenheight, Marikina City
Teresa Remiter, 28, Sampaloc, Manila

Cebu
Ricardo Cabrigas, 43, Lutopan, Toledo City
Rosemerie Sanogal, 26, Mandaue City, Cebu
Erwin Tortor, 24, MJ Cuenco Ave., Cebu City

mora, 25, Tondo, Manila
Cruz, 37, Sikatuna Vill., Quezon City
osa Jr., 27, San Jose, Quezon City
eyes, 20, Binondo, Manila
anais, 23, Quiapo, Manila
rsula Dominguez, 28, Taytay, Rizal
28, B.F., Parañaque
ncio, 21, Cinco Hermanos Subd., Marikina
l Farren, 25, San Antonio Valley 5, Parañaque
r. 43, Calumpang, Marikina
s. 30, SFDM, Quezon City
las, 41, Valley Verde St., Pasig City
n, 23, Tondo, Manila
Cubao, Quezon City
da, 26, Malibay, Pasay City
Gonzales, 35, GMA, Cavite
31, Sucat, Parañaque
Gumba, 27, Don Enrique Heights, Quezon City
rio, 54, San Antonio, Cavite City
28, Binondo, Manila
e, 32, P. Celle St., Doña Dominga
go, 30, Cubao, Quezon City
as, 42, Tramo St., Pasay City
35, Rosario, Cavite
e Lobaton, 25, Alabang, Muntinlupa
9, Diliman, Quezon City
Mendoza, 44, Kapayapaan St., Caloocan City
ado, 60, Diliman, Quezon City
s Mercado, 21, Diliman, Quezon City
e Natividad, 33, Marilao, Bulacan
upan, 31, San Francisco St., Mandaluyong

Rene Joseph Ner, 36, Saratoga loop, Alabang
Eduardo Ong, 42, PGPV 1612, Pasig City
Frederick Ong, 37, C Calantas St., Makati
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Vivian Peligro, 21, Gen. Trias, Cavite
Nilo Ramillo Jr., 41, Hagonoy, Bulacan
Napoleon Ramos, 47, Francis Ville Subd., Antipolo City
Alexis Razon, 19, Philam Life Vill. Las Piñas
Marivic Resurection, 26, Mabuhay Homes, Laguna
Edwin Reyes, 45, BF Resort, Las Piñas
Ron Reyes, 30, Duraon St., Parañaque
Jennifer Ricopuerto, 24, West Crame, San Juan
Eugenio Rios Jr., 32, Pamplona, Las Piñas
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Ma. Theresa Tongco, 51, Scout Rallos St., Quezon City

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Reynaldo Ubaldo, 55, Signal Vill., Taguig, M.M.
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Airween Verso, 24, P. Celle St., Pasay City
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Donato Zacarias, 27, Sta Ana, Manila

Cebu
Moracel Abad, 24, Oppra Village, Cebu City
Bonifacio L. Abangan, 45, Langtad Naga, Cebu
Ricky F. Abayon, 27, Apas, Cebu City
Ellen Apa, 21, Mabolo, Cebu City
Marlene Bacus, 27, Lahug, Cebu City
Pamela Bueno, 43, Mandaue, Cebu
Espera M. Caballingan, 23, Mandaue, Cebu
Susan T. Chua, 48, Jones Ave., Cebu City
Ritchel M. Conde, 20, Borbon, Cebu
Aida S. dela Cruz, 35, Lahug, Cebu City
Carmelito E. Jr. dela Cruz, 19, Lahug, Cebu City
Manolo dela Cruz, 22, Dalaguete, Cebu
Cheryl delos Reyes, 24, Dimataga St. Lapu-lapu City
Rhey delos Reyes, 36, Cebu City
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Glenda A. Go, 22, Mabolo, Cebu City

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Hilson E. Hisola, 39, Hernan Cortes, Mandaue City
Julius Jore, 27, Hernan Cortes, Mandaue City
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Eric Alvin Po, 20, A.C. Cortes Ave., Mandaue City
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Steve Taylor, 59, Banilad, Cebu
Ginily C. Tilar, 21, Lahug, Cebu
Emiliano Ty, 58, Jones Ave., Cebu City
Vergel Varilla, 23, Novaliches, QC
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4, Sta Elena St., Manila
n Edes, 27, Teresa Heights, Novaliches
a, 29, Port Area, Metro Manila
ny Elayda, 31, Pioneer St., Mandaluyong
eria, 35, M. Adriatico St., Malate
ore, 45, Noveleta, Cavite
1, Loyola Heights, Quezon City
s, 30, Malibay, Pasay City
osa, 28, Administration St., Proj 8
errer, 29, Sta. Ana, Manila
er, 29, Sta. Ana, Manila
42, Cortembo, Makati
rino, 26, P. Celle, Pasay City
ie, 34, Kaunlaran Village, Navotas
anielas, 39, Valle Verde, Mandaluyong
43, V. Mapa Ext., Sta Mesa
cla, 26, Edsa Ext. cor. Celle, Pasay City
rcia, 30, Balintawak, Quezon City
Gavino, 23, Vasquez St., Malate
varan, 47, Resort Village, Las Piñas City
on, 24, P. Celle St., Pasay City
os, 38, Biñan, Laguna
30, Sampaloc, Manila
les, 41, V Luna St., Quezon City
on, 34, Guijo, Fort Bonifacio
cson Jr., 73, Kapitolyo, Pasig City
ay, 24, Edsa Ext. cor Celle, Pasay City
do Reginado B. Hernandez, 41, Boni Ave., Pasig City
1. 24, Adriatic St., Malra
nico, 31, Shaw Blvd cor Orambo, Pasig City
1. Edsa Ext., P. Celle
Sauyo Rd., Novaliches
los, 38, Brgy. San Domingo, Laguna
uanao, 67, Paco, Manila
BF Las Pinas City
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25, Tandang Sora St., Quezon City
at, 27, Murphy, Quezon City

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Ricardo Mallari, 46, Tondo, Manila
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Joseph More, 37, Batasan Hills, Quezon City
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Mark Anthony Nueras, 19, Beatriz, Quezon City
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Al Feliciano Visorro, 33, Napindan, Taguig
Maria Ana Volante, 26, Malilipot, Albay
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Ralfy D. Cordero, 20, Lapaz, Iloilo City
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Iris Estrada, 23, Mandaue City, Cebu
Maria B. Gimoros, 23, H. Cortes St., Mandaue City
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Ivy Blanche C. Ho, 31, Mabolo, Cebu City
Renante Ilong, 24, Sudlan, Mandaue City
Garry Jacalan, 31, Cebu City
Xym Angelo Paul R. Limgerco, 29, Sta. Monica Homes, Lapu-lapu City
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Alan P. Masendo, 29, Mactan Eco Zone 1, Lapu-lapu City
Paterno T. Matidios, 37, Mactan, Lapu-lapu City
Ernalyn N. Matonog, 19, Apas, Cebu City
Jeasen C. Morales, 28, Borbon, Cebu
Jovenal Oblianda, 44, Hipodromo, Cebu City
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Renato F. Oga, 38, Talamban, Cebu City
Josephine C. Ohashi, 44, Lahug, Cebu
Frances Pacquiao, 25, Mabolo, Cebu
Alicia H. Perez, 23, Banilad, Mandaue
Rene Perez, 32, Driving Range, Lapu-lapu City
Caroline Jane Po, 24, Banilad, Cebu
Eliza Revelo, 29, Urgello St., Cebu City
Erlinda D. Sayson, 57, Forest Hills, Banawa
Concepcion Simbajon, 35, Mambaling, Cebu
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Jeanith D. Sumalpong, 31, Rama Ave., Cebu
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Raymond Tayag, 46, Mactan Marina Mass
Esterlito Togono, 20, Lahug, Cebu City
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Regina F. Ubanan, 28, Toledo, Cebu
Karen B. Vallente, 20, Maribago, Lapu-lapu City
Michael D. Venlegas, 37, Subang-daku, Mandaue City
Nerius Venlegas, 32, Banilad, Mandaue
Dalia M. Villanueva, 27, Liloan, Cebu
Anabel Villarubia, 23, Banilad, Cebu
Gino Yianan, 35, Gorordo Avenue, Cebu City

do, 63, Diliman, Quezon City
Moje, 27, Carmel 2, Quezon City
uran, 24, Greenhills West, San Juan
24, Malibay Edsa, Pasay City
Ojendras, 41, Old Balara, Quezon City
ies, 44, Lopez Jaena St., Cavite City
Pascual, 44, M.L. Quezon St. M.M.
a Ramos, 27, Greenhills, San Juan
mos, 31, P. Celle St., Pasay City
Reyes, 29, Gen. P.R. Sotto, San Juan
ose, 52, Dalahican, Cavite City
adores, 19, SFDM, Quezon City
55, Ermita, Manila
Greenmeadows, Quezon City

ena, 53, Apas Lahug, Cebu
Aguilar, 43, Busay, Cebu City
itorque, 21, Barrio Luz, Cebu

Homer Almendras Jr., 38, Purok 8 Cebu City
Maricell F. Almerez, 21, A Leon Kilat St., Cebu City
Joelito F. Anabieza, 35, Consolacion, Cebu
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Victor Banilllan Jr., 31, Mactan, Lapu-lapu City
Joselito G. Bayubay, 33, Mabolo, Cebu
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Elisa P. Carino, 33, H. Cortes, Mandaue City
Eddie Casil, 31, Banilad, Cebu City
Annalie S. Castro, 25, Labangon, Cebu
Arlena Cayon, 32, Bacalso Ave. Cebu City
Jessica Cortez, 31, Oslob, Cebu
Paulino Jr. Cuestas, 26, Sitio Ylaya, Talamban, Cebu
Reynaldo A. Dappin, 35, Lilo-an, Cebu
Achilles M. Dano, 27, Gorordo Avenue, Cebu City
Ross Marie V. Delina, 24, Lahug, Cebu City
Glenito D. Domaboc, 48, Pit-os, Cebu

Jerry C. Edulantes, 33, Argao, Cebu
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Ma. Grace Espra, 30, Maribago, Lapu-Lapu City
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Maricel Ladera, 23, Sitio Rio Laguerta
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Melougane G. Mahinay, 28, Oslob, Cebu
Joseph O. Martem, 38, Villa Aurora, Cebu City
Ernalyn N. Matonog, 19, Lahug, Cebu City
Nessiedah Faith D. Mayagma, 22, Umapad, Mandaue City
Lolla P. Molit, 29, Lahug, Cebu City
Jimmy B. Nadala, 34, Tisa-I, Cebu City
Felix G. Ngolot, 32, Labangon, Cebu
Ritchel Odevar, 26, Visitacion St., Cebu City
Antoine Mark E. Olico, 25, Marina Mall, Lapu-Lapu City
May Roseal R. Pejaro, 25, Juana Osmena Ext., Cebu City
Charina Po, 28, A.C. Cortes Ave., Mandaue City

Marvin M. Quijano, 21, Maguikay, Mandaue City
Annaliza Quitor, 22, Guizo, Mandaue City
Arnulfo B. Rebaye, 35, Township, Toledo City
Roselyn Riconalla, 24, Banilad, Cebu City
Manuel A. Jr. Romero, 44, Mabolo, Cebu City
Khryss Charm B. Rosecapa, 20, Lahug, Cebu City
Zarmeen Sapitula, 27, Tabunok, Talisay
Blisyl May Sono, 26, 9/10 Crossroads Mall, Banilad, Cebu City
Giovanni A. Sepada, 26, Catabaco, Toledo City
Aida S. Tabuldan, 40, Apas, Cebu
Arsenio A. Taneo, 41, H. Cortez Wireless, Mandaue
Raymond Tayag, 46, Marina Mall, Lapu-Lapu City
Paul Young Tiu, 40, Mabolo, Cebu City
Godofredo A. Tombocon Jr., 22, Subangdaku, Mandaue
Jenny Ubanan, 29, Bunga, Toledo City
Maria Theresa Villarojo, 20, Lahug, Cebu City
Sally B. Yeung, 47, Junquera St., Cebu City
Calixto Yongco, 51, Fortuna St., Mandaue City
Rosario O. Yongco, 53, Banilad, Mandaue City

76, Tumulak St., Gun-Ob
20, Cubacub, Mandaue City
n, 31, Pusok, Lapu-lapu City
as, 30, Basak, Mandaue City
Mabolo, Cebu City
2, Riverside, Cebu City
nan, 34, Lutopan, Toledo City
lla, 22, Cemento, Lapu-lapu City
mor, 25, Lapu-lapu, Cebu
24, Mabolo, Cebu City
n, 39, Mactan, Lapu-lapu City
Mandaue City, Cebu
44, Tipolo, Mandaue City
la Plaza, 30, Kabunasan, Cebu City

All winners will be notified through telegram as to where and when they can claim their prizes. The winner must present the notification telegram and two (2) original and valid identification documents (driver's license, passport, NBI clearance, or birth certificate). Prizes not claimed within 60 days from this publication or the notification thru telegram, whichever comes later, will be forfeited with the written approval of BFAD.

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Japan, Asean renew pledge on bond mart

TOKYO—Japan renewed its pledge on Friday to help Asia develop bond markets as it seeks to make use of its financial expertise in a region coming to terms with the rise of China as an economic powerhouse.

Japan and the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) agreed to support efforts to issue Asian currency-denominated bonds and enhance regional bond markets.

A statement after a two-day leaders' summit of Japan and Asean in Tokyo said they would "continue support for the Asian Bond Markets Development Initiative, as part of strengthening Asia's own international financial architecture."

Asean, along with Japan, China and South Korea—the so-called Asean+3—have been taking steps to develop deeper and more liquid bond markets so Asian nations can begin to rely less on outside and short-term financing, which has been blamed for triggering the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98.

Further dollar weakness may accelerate the drive for Asian nations to develop a system where they can raise more funds in their local currencies and utilize Asia's massive savings.

Japan can use its expertise by having the largest and most liquid bond market in the region, as well as use its high credit rating to back bonds issued by other Asian nations which have lower ratings.

'Japan will facilitate the development of regional bond markets by utilizing the various functions of relevant Japanese entities such as JBIC as well as the Nippon Export and Investment Insurance to help facilitate the process of issuing and providing guarantees for local currency-denominated bonds," the statement said.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Malaysia and Thailand.

Asean+3 already have six working-level committees to develop guarantees for bond issues, improve clearance and settlement systems, and consider a regionwide credit rating agency.

The nations are also working with international institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank.

"High-level political commitment is indispensable," ADB president Tadao Chino told Reuters in a recent interview, especially because of regulatory changes needed to make the region's bond markets more efficient.

The ADB plans to issue local currency-denominated bonds in China, India and Thailand next year, partly to give impetus to nations seeking to raise funding in their own currencies.

Separately, Asian central banks have pooled some of their massive foreign reserves to invest in bonds issued by Asian nations, although the current Asian Bond Fund invests in dollar-denominated bonds.

In June, 11 central banks in the East Asian and Pacific region agreed to pool $1 billion yen worth of their foreign reserves to buy dollar-denominated bonds issued by Asian nations and semi-governmental institutions.

Asian foreign exchange reserves have hit a record high of $1.85 trillion.

Government sources say the nations are also considering setting up a separate fund in the near future to invest in Asian currency-denominated bonds. *Reuters*

Worldwide PC market outlook improves

SAN JOSE, California—Driven by consumer demand and enticing bargains, the personal computer market is expected to reach "record" shipment levels in 2003 and 2004, according to a report by a market research firm.

IDC raised its forecast, projecting that worldwide PC shipments will grow by 11.4 percent to a total of 152.6 million units in 2003 and 169.9 million in 2004.

The previous shipment record was 140.2 million units in 2000, which was before the worldwide economic downturn hit hard.

Demand in the PC market had been improving slightly and steadily since 2002.

Demand surged during the third quarter this year when shipments worldwide jumped by almost 16 percent from the year-ago period, IDC said Thursday.

"We have been waiting for a recovery in the PC market for a while, and with the recent third-quarter results and general strength of the market, the recovery is happening a little earlier than we expected," said Loren Loverde, director of PC research at IDC.

IDC analysts expect PC demand to remain strong through next year.

Consumers continue to take advantage of lower prices and improved features of computers, especially in the notebook market.

Corporate spending on computers is also expected to improve modestly next year as companies look to replace systems they bought before the turn of the millennium, Loverde said.

But whether the projected growth in the PC market would reflect a broader technology industry recovery is unclear, he said.

Another market research firm, Gartner Inc., earlier projected a worldwide shipment total of 164.3 million for this year.

This is up 10.9 percent from the previous year.

Garnter, however, cautioned that the PC market growth rate, currently driven largely by consumers, may not hold up if the global economy doesn't improve and corporate demand remains lackluster. *AP*

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

IN THE MATTER OF AMENDING COMELEC RESOLUTION NO. 6426

Benjamin S. Abalos Sr.	Chairman
Luzviminda G. Tancangco	Commissioner
Rufino S.B. Javier	Commissioner
Ralph C. Lantion	Commissioner
Mehol K. Sadain	Commissioner
Resurreccion Z. Borra	Commissioner
Florentino A. Tuason, Jr.	Commissioner

PROMULGATED: 10 December 2003

x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

RESOLUTION NO. 6460

This pertains to the amendment of Comelec Resolution No. 6426 entitled "IN THE MATTER OF AMENDING THE CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OVERSEAS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT OF 2003" particularly on the dates/periods for the preparation of the Municipality/City/District Registry of Overseas Absentee Voters and the National Registry of Overseas Absentee Voters.

The Commission RESOLVED as it hereby RESOLVES, to AMEND Comelec Resolution No. 6426, to now read as follows:

"xxx xxx xxx

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission, pursuant to the authority vested in it by the Constitution, Republic Act No. 9189, and other election laws, RESOLVED as it hereby RESOLVES, to amend that part of Resolution 6325 to read:

ACTIVITIES	*DATES/PERIODS*
Preparation of the Municipal/City/District Registry of Overseas Absentee Voters and the National Registry of Overseas Absentee Voters	Not later than 15 December 2003. (Art. 21, IRR)"

This Resolution shall take effect seven (7) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

The Education and Information Department, in coordination with the Committee on Overseas Absentee Voting, shall cause the publication of this Resolution and shall furnish copies thereof to the Department of Foreign Affairs for distribution to the different Philippine embassies, consulates and other foreign service establishments abroad.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

LUZVIMINDA G. TANCANGCO
Commissioner

RUFINO S.B. JAVIER
Commissioner

RALPH C. LANTION
Commissioner

MEHOL K. SADAIN
Commissioner

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

cc: The Chairman
All Commissioners
The Executive Director
The Deputy Executive Director for Operations
The Education and Information Department
The Committee on Absentee Voting

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROHIBITION AGAINST APPOINTMENT OR HIRING OF NEW EMPLOYEES; CREATION OR FILLING UP OF NEW POSITIONS; GIVING SALARY INCREASES; TRANSFERRING/DETAILING CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES AND SUSPENSION OF ELECTIVE LOCAL OFFICIALS IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 10, 2004 SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.

PRESENT:

ABALOS, Benjamin S., Sr.	Chairman
TANCANGCO, Luzviminda G.	Commissioner
JAVIER, Rufino S.B.	Commissioner
LANTION, Ralph C.	Commissioner
SADAIN, Mehol K.	Commissioner
BORRA, Resurreccion Z.	Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino A., Jr.	Commissioner

Promulgated: 10 December 2003

x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

RESOLUTION NO. 6456

WHEREAS, Sec. 261 of the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines provides:

"xxx – The following shall be guilty of an election offense:

xxx xxx xxx

"(g) *Appointment of new employees, creation of new position, promotion, or giving salary increases* – During the period of forty five (45) days before regular election and thirty days before a special election, (1) any head, official or appointing officer of a government office, agency or instrumentality, whether national or local, including government-owned or controlled corporations, who appoints or hires any new employee, whether provisional, temporary or casual, or creates and fills any new positions, except upon prior authority of the Commission. The Commission shall not grant the authority sought unless, it is satisfied that the position to be filled is essential to the proper functioning of the office or agency concerned, and that the position shall not be filled in a manner that may influence the election.

"As an *exception* to the foregoing provisions, a new employee may be appointed in case of urgent need: Provided, however, That notice of the appointment shall be given to the Commission within three days from the date of the appointment. Any appointment or hiring in violation of this provision shall be null and void.

"(2) Any government official who promotes, or gives any increase of salary or remuneration or privilege to any government official or employee, including those in government-owned or controlled corporations.

"(h) *Transfer of officers and employees in the civil service* – Any public official who makes or causes any transfer or detail whatever of any officer or employee in the civil service including public school teachers, within the *election period* except upon approval of the Commission. (Underlining supplied)

xxx xxx xxx

"(x) *Suspension of elective provincial, city, municipal or barangay officer* – The provisions of law to the contrary notwithstanding during the election period, any public official who suspends, without prior approval of the Commission, any elective provincial, city, municipal or barangay officer, unless said suspension will be for purposes of applying the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act in relation to the suspension and removal of elective officials; in which case the provision of this section shall be inapplicable."

WHEREAS, to enforce effectively the foregoing provisions, there is need to promulgate the necessary rules for the guidance of all concerned:

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission on Elections, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code and other election laws, has RESOLVED to promulgate, as it hereby promulgates, the following rules to implement the provisions of Section 261 subsections (g), (h) and (x) of the Omnibus Election Code.

SECTION 1. **Prohibited acts** – (a) During the election period from December 15, 2003 until June 9, 2004, no public official shall make or cause any transfer/detail whatsoever of any officer or employee in the civil service, including public school teachers, or suspend elective provincial, city, municipal or barangay official, except upon prior written approval of the Commission. Transfer as used in this provision shall be construed as any personnel movement from one government agency to another or from one department, division, geographical unit or subdivision of a government agency to another with or without the issuance of an appointment.

(b) Beginning March 26, 2004 until May 10, 2004, no head, official or appointing officer of any national or local government office, agency or instrumentality, including government-owned or controlled corporations, shall: (1) appoint or hire any new employee, whether permanent, provisional, temporary, substitute or casual; or (2) create and fill any new position, except upon prior authority of the Commission.

(c) Beginning March 26, 2004 until May 10, 2004, no government official shall promote or give any increase of salary or remuneration or privilege to any government official or employee, including those in government-owned or controlled corporations.

SECTION 2. **Requests for authority of the Commission; How to file:** (2.1.) Requests for authority to make or cause any transfer or detail of any officer or employee in the civil service with official station in the central/main offices of national agencies and government-owned or controlled corporations, shall be submitted in writing to the Commission through its Law Department indicating; (a) the office and place to which the officer or employee is proposed to be transferred/detailed or otherwise moved; and (b) stating the reasons therefore. Similar requests involving regional directors, assistant regional directors or positions of similar rank, Philippine National Police Provincial/District Directors or Commanders, Officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines with the rank of major or equivalent rank, and/or holding positions of battalion commanders or higher, Provincial Treasurers, Schools Division Superintendents, and Assistant Superintendents, irrespective of their official stations shall likewise be submitted to the Commission through its Law Department.

Requests involving government employees with official stations in the field offices including the National Capital Region shall be filed with the corresponding offices of the Regional Election Directors where the employee(s) sought to be detailed or transferred is stationed. Whereupon, the Regional Election Director concerned shall submit to the Commission En Banc copy furnished its Personnel Department, for consolidation and submission to the Law Department, by fastest means a report on applications acted upon by him/her within seventy-two (72) hours from his/her action approving or denying the same.

Requests for inter-regional transfers or details shall be filed with the Commission on Elections through its Law Department.

(2.2.) Requests for authority to appoint or hire new employees, shall be submitted in writing to the Office of the Regional Election Directors of the region where the vacancy exists, stating all the necessary data and reasons for the same.

Similar requests involving employees in the central or main offices of national government agençies and government-owned or controlled corporations shall be submitted in writing to the Commission through the Law Department.

(2.3) Requests for authority to create and fill new positions shall be submitted to the Commission through its Law Department.

Renewal of appointments of temporary, casual, substitute and contractual personnel are not covered by this prohibition and therefore will no longer need prior authority of the Commission. However, the appointing authority shall furnish the Commission, through its Regional Offices for field positions and the Personnel Department for main office positions a complete list of employees whose appointments were renewed indicating their position, item number, salary grade and station.

(2.4) Requests for authority to suspend an elective provincial, city, municipal or barangay officer shall be submitted to the Commission through its Law Department supported by a copy of a formal complaint executed under oath and containing the specific charges therefor.

(2.5) The Commission or its Regional Election Directors office shall not grant the authority unless it is satisfied that the position to be filled is essential to the proper functioning of the office or agency concerned, that the filling up of such position shall not in any manner influence the results of the elections.

All actions of the Regional Election Directors granting the requests for exemptions from the coverage of the ban herein involved are subject to review by the Commission and shall remain valid and effective unless otherwise rescinded or nullified by the Commission.

SECTION 3. Urgent need to appoint new employees – Where there is urgent need to appoint or hire new employees, the same may be allowed without the need for a prior request for authority from the Commission provided that within three (3) days from the date of the appointment or hiring, the Commission through the respective Regional Election Directors offices, for field positions, or through the Personnel Department for central or main office positions shall be notified in writing, stating therein the exact date when the position sought to be filled became vacant, the cause of vacancy, reason/s for said appointment or hiring and all the necessary data or information regarding the same. Failure to give notice as herein required shall render the appointment null and void.

The need to fill up a vacant position by a new employee may be considered urgent if the position sought to be filled has been vacated either by the death, retirement, resignation, promotion or transfer of the regular incumbent within sixty (60) days from the issuance of the appointment and the same cannot be filled by promotion or transfer of insiders within the same period. Appointment to a position which has been vacant for more than sixty (60) days before the issuance of appointment shall not be considered urgent and must, therefore, require prior written authority from the Commission or the Regional Election Directors concerned.

SECTION 4. Total ban on promotion, salary increases, granting privileges – Promotion, or giving any increase of salary, remuneration, or privilege to any government official or employee including those in government-owned or controlled corporations, is strictly prohibited without exception whatsoever. Promotion as use in this provision shall mean a personnel movement involving the issuance of an appointment and not by mere designation.

SECTION 5. Injunction – The Civil Service Commission (CSC), including all its field offices, is hereby enjoined not to approve the appointment of new employees where no prior written approval of the Commission or its Regional Election Directors office is presented by the appointing authority concerned or proof that the required notice within the 3-day reglementary period as provided in section 3 hereof has been complied with.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Commission on Audit (COA), including all their field offices, shall not release or authorize the release of any appropriation, or pass in audit payments or expenditures of public funds that may be directly or indirectly be used in violation of the foregoing prohibitions.

All field offices of the CSC, including its deputized agencies and citizens arms, are directed to submit immediately to the Commission on a written report on any violation of said provisions of the Omnibus Election Code.

SECTION 6. Penalty – Any violation of the provisions of this Resolution shall, constitute an election offense and shall be punishable by imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than six (6) years, among other penalties provided by law.

SECTION 7. Effectivity – This resolution shall take effect on the seventh day after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

SECTION 8. Dissemination – The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation, and shall furnish copies thereof to all Departments, Constitutional Commissions, Offices, Provincial Governors, City and Municipal Mayors and government agencies including government-owned or controlled corporations, and all field offices of the Commission.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

LUZVIMINDA G. TANCANGCO
Commissioner

RUFINO S.B. JAVIER
Commissioner

RALPH C. LANTION
Commissioner

MEHOL K. SADAIN
Commissioner

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

Annexes

1. Request for authority to transfer or detail employee.
2. Request for authority to hire new employees.
3. Report on appointment of new employees.
4. Report on Violation(s) of, transfer, detail, promotion, salary increase, etc.

(PDI – December 13, 2003)

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Reinsurance for NAPOCOR/PSALM/TRANSCO'S Industrial All-Risks Insurance Policy)

In view of the failure of the first bidding held on November 24, 2003, for this purpose, the DOF-NPC-GSIS Joint Bidding Committee (JBC), thru its Eligibility and Evaluation Group (EEG) is inviting qualified local and foreign reinsurance companies/brokers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the renewal of reinsurance for the National Power Corporation's Industrial All Risks Insurance Policy, with an indicative budget of US$12.0 Million – US$14.7 Million, all inclusive, for the period 12:00 noon of January 31, 2004 to 12:00 noon of January 31, 2005.

	SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES
Issuance of Eligibility And Bidding Documents	December 16,2003- January 5, 2004 9:00 AM-5:00 PM JBC Secretariat 7th Floor, EDPC Bldg. BSP Complex Roxas Blvd., Manila
Pre-Bid Conference	December 22, 2003, 9:00 AM Board Rm., 6th Floor DOF Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Manila
Submission and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Envelopes	January 6, 2004, 2:00 pm. Office of the Chairman Board Rm., 6th Floor DOF Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Manila

For applicant-foreign reinsurers and applicant-brokers with foreign lead reinsurers, the foreign reinsurer must have a credit rating of at least "A" from a reputable rating agency as of June 2003, and certify that it will provide a lead line of at least 20% of the reinsured risk. Domestic and foreign lead reinsurers must have a net worth of at least Php2.0 Billion as of December 31, 2002.

Eligibility and bid documents shall be issued to new applicants upon filing of a Letter of Intent to Apply and payment of a non-refundable fee of US$500.00 to the National Power Corporation.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bid, sufficiency of Bid Security, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract governed by the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations.

The JBC and the EEG reserve the right to reject any and all bids or Letters of Intent, waive any defect therein and accept the offer which it deems responsive and most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. PORFIRIO B. VILLENA JR.**
Director IV, PDMSG
Presiding Officer, Eligibility and Evaluation Group
DOF-NPC-GSIS Joint Bidding Committee

(PDI – Dec. 7, 8, 13 & 14, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) and the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) invite interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the:

SERVICE CONTRACT
for the

FINANCING, DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING, MARKETING, OPERATION, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A UNIFIED TICKETING SYSTEM FOR LRT LINE 1 AND 2, MRT LINE 3

Project Cost: PhP 500,000,000.00

Bid Documents can be obtained from the Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) Secretariat at Room 163 16th Floor, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila during regular office hours from December 15 to 22, 2003 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of FIFTY THOUSAND (P50,000.00) PESOS.

Site inspection will be held from December 19, 22 and 23, 2003. For purpose of clarifying issues, a pre-bid conference shall be held on **December 29, 2003** at 2:00 p.m. at the above address. Deadline for the submission of bids shall be on January 19, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. also at the above address and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

The determination of qualification shall be based on the non-discretionary "Pass-Fail" criteria concerning requirements on bidder's experience, technical and financial capability, as well as completeness of submitted documents.

DOTC and LRTA reserve the right to reject any of all bids or partes thereof, without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the Bidder may incur in the preparation of its bid, and will entertain only such bid established to be most advantageous to the DOTC and LRTA.

(Sgd.) **JOSE L. CORTES, JR.**
Chairman, Special Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Dec. 13 & 20, 2003)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Geothermal Generation
Bac-Man Geothermal Power Plant Complex
Palayan Bayan, Manito, Albay

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

PR# 3BAC-03-0820/ PB-03-0761	–	Refilling of Hydrogen Cylinders and Carbon Dioxide Cylinders	
		Cost Estimate	P1,344,000.00
		Bidding Date	December 22, 2003 2:00 PM BMGPPC Conference Room
PR# 3BAC-03-0705/ PB-03-0878	–	Supply of spareparts including materials needed in the assembly of mechanical gas extractor gearbox and impellers type GX225/3 of Unit No. 2	
		Cost Estimate	P7.8M
		Pre-Bid Conference	December 18, 2003 / 9:00 AM
		Bidding Date	December 22, 2003 2:00 PM BMGPPC Conference Room

Interested parties are invited to pre-qualify and to submit sealed bids on the above to be opened in a public bidding at the BMGPPC Conference Room, Palayan, Bayan, Manito, Albay.

Accreditation forms and bidding documents can be obtained from Mondays thru Fridays at the Procurement Services, Ground Floor, Bacman Geothermal Power Plant Complex.

(Sgd.) ROLANDO E. CAWALING
Division Mgr., Admin/Finance

(PDI–Dec. 12, 13, 15 & 17, 2003)

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Maid/Cook/Yaya 7328405

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

L-BAHAY 8383742/09208449984

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COMMERCIAL

PASIG

Meralco Ave cor Lot 48T / sm Ok 4 Hi-ris Call 645-3731

QUEZON CITY

Kamias Rd 4 Display GF Res 8.2M Call 645-3731

COMML/RESDL

MAKATI

PASEO PARKVIEW-near Ayala & Paseo Ave., Studio 37m^2 Call NATT 0917-5403034

HOUSE & LOT

KALOOCAN

CAMARIN CAL CITY LA240m^2 FA104/m^2 2Bdrms 1T&B P1.2M Vic/Gie 8903461loc27

LAS PINAS

950T 2BR 2STY 8054686

LAS PINAS / BACOOR
2-4 BRs., 1-3 T&B, 2 Storey
P5,000.00 to Reserve / No Loan Req.
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PASIG

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P381,000/unit condo 2Kms fr. SM Fairview Lipat Agad/Pag-ibig 8179650 / 9750 / 0919-8994322

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NR ORTIGAS EXT P2.5M CAINTA Ridgmont Exec New French-3BR Bungalow Lot: 150m^2 T9488240/9339448

NR ORTIGAS EXT
Ridgmont Ave New French 2c'port 3br1Maids 3TB w/view Lot 150m^2 2.9M 9339448 9488240

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MILAN CAMELLA HOMES 3Stry FA 210/m^2 LA 78/m^2 P1.9M Vic 8903461 loc 27/25

MAKATI

MKT NR AYALA BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/2tb/grge P3.435M 8903461 loc 34

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.6M C5 Nr The Fort
12T/mo. or 3Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mkti 0917-8313226

Kensington Parkplace In Fort Bonifacio 0917-5213838

MANILA

930T nr UST 0920-8309744

ESPANA TOWER nr UST 0917-8102903

NR LA SALLE TAFT BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P3.295M 8903461 loc 34

Nr UST 3.6M 4br 3tb 1cg Nr bank, Loan Ok Call 645-3731

PASIG

Malayan Plaza ADB Ave. Nr Podium Cell 0917-5213838

QUEZON CITY

CUBAO 1.4M 10% DP 9132224

Rush! Fernandina 88 100sqm 4.5M Neg 3br 2tb 0916-7069277

LOT

KALOOCAN

RAINBOW VILLAGE5 LA216m^2 P3,473/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc25

LAS PINAS

TALON 204m^2@P4,000 639-1694 / 0917-8102903

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

MANILA

Nr Malacanang 570sqm 16T /sm Neg Call 645-3731

PASIG

METROVILLE SUBD LA 333m^2 P4,054/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

URGENT SALE R.Thaddeus St Romeo Marietta Vill 261m^2 neg Cristy 09167864705

QUEZON CITY

LOYOLA GRAND VILLAS choice lots w/ view 426-5650•929-1832

VILLA ESPANA LA108.50m^2 P12,000/m^2 Vic8903461loc27

Xavierville 2 Nice Loc 17,000T /sqm Call 645-3731

RIZAL

CRESTVIEW Subd Marcos Hway nr Sta Lucia LA120 3700m^2 Nido T9330229

Land Ideal for Factory /Piggery 13988m^2 1T/m^2 nr San Mateo Rizal Call Rina @ 7244574/7260201

OTHER AREAS

RUSH SALE! Tagaytay Lot Very Near Evercrest Golf Club 3,100m^2 Asking P1,000/m^2 Pls. Call Sally 862-0786/ 861-1786 0918-9057184

TOWN & CNTRY HILLS LA240m^2 P3,125/m^2 Vic 8903461loc 27

OTHER PROVINCIAL

Puerto Princesa Beachfront @800/ sqm Contact Nick 0917-2703720

BATANGAS

RANCHO VISTA SUBD LA613m^2 P2,284/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

TAAL BTGS nr Diversion Rd 6794m^2 P185.50/m^2 Vic8903461

BULACAN

SAN MIGUEL LA 4000m^2 P180/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

TOWN & COUNTRY LA 180m^2 P2,900/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

CAVITE

DON BOSCO EXEC HTS LA128m^2 P2,900/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

ST. CHARBEL DASMA 371m^2 P2,650/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

LAGUNA

SOUTH PEAK P5,000/m^2 LA240m^2 Vic8903461loc25/27

MEMORIAL LOT

MALAYAN GUD LOC 2884154

Mt. Zion Taytay 0920-8521248

BULACAN

SAN MIGUEL LA 4000m^2 P180/m^2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

BATANGAS

TAAL BTGS nr Diversion Rd 6794m^2 P185.50/m^2 Vic8903461

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

QUEZON CITY

Cubao3.8M Studio Lady9132224

RIZAL

4BR 2TB Kingsville Subd Marcos Hway 6478751 Baby

CONDO/TWNHSE

KALOOCAN

NEW 1BR•2BR COM'L CLINIC•OFFICE•P6.5Tup #162 P. Jacinto cor. #39 Biglang Awa Caloocan 323-0175

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

NEW STUDIO / Coml / 2BR 6.5Tup 1672 Dian St. Mkti 843-9418•0918 9390355 Rose

QUEZON CITY

3BR Valencia corner Castilla St T7267909 / 09175325838 Rowena

NEW MANILA few minutes drive to St Lukes, nr San Juan 2BR P17T/mo 700-1393

TWNHSE 3BR Grge #71Ponce E. Rodriguez Call 9274719

APARTMENT

MAKATI

236 Aguho St Comembo 2BR w/Grge strong H20 728-3283

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845 Samat St., Mand. City Tel. # 5337709 to 12

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nr Ateneo 1BRTB grg 7T 6819583

QUEZON CITY

Studio Unit w/TB kitchen grge 22 Charleyville White Plains Call late PM till evening 9115162

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2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

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Office units for rent. Locsin Bldg Ayala cor Mktl Ave 59, 141, 199 & 888sqm. P300/sqm For more details, call Nina at 817-0405

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Speedboat 15 ft 70 HP Evenrude with trailer in perfect condition •896-7851/897-9102•

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1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0357

1.5% CARLOAN 952-2510

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/o Taking Car 6567685

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

APPLIANCES

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COOPERACION ESPANOLA

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional AECI is currently supporting the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of East Timor DRET. AECI invites applications from qualified and experienced individuals for the senior position of

PUBLIC HEALTH & HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

To work at the Ministry's Headquarters in Dili, East Timor from January to June 2004 approximately with the following:

Objectives
- Strengthen and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of DRET health system
- Collaborate in the design of hospital management systems, including structural, organizational, and legal aspects

Functions
- Assess strategic issues relating to the provision of hospital and related services by the Ministry of Health
- Monitor the financial and operational performance of the hospitals and related services of East Timor and the Oecussi Enclave
- Monitor the clinical and operational risk of DRET hospitals and related services
- Give the Minister of Health and DRET Government advice and recommendations on public health strategy, monitoring and assessment.

The successful candidate will have
- A license to practice medicine
- PG Degree in Hospital Management and/or Provision of Hospital Services
- Significant track record of success in programme and people management
- 10 years' experience of health service delivery and knowledge of public health, health care financing, policy development and health systems reform in developing countries
- Working knowledge of Spanish & English. Portuguese and Bahasa an asset

Applicants must be prepared to relocate to DPET and will undertake in-country and overseas travel. Fees of the successful candidate/s will be fixed according to qualifications and experience. Please quote your remuneration rates.

To apply, please e-mail with your resumé and cover letter to aeci@aeci.org.ph or by fax to (632) 8469909 to the attention of José-Maria Taberné, AECI General Coordinator.

The closing date for applications will be Friday, 26 December 2003. Only short-listed candidates will receive responses.

BENGUET CORPORATION
One Corporate Plaza
845 Arnaiz Ave., 1223 Makati City

ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of Benguet Corporation will be held on Wednesday, December 17, 2003 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon at the Sign of the Anvil, 5th Floor, Equitable-PCI Bank Tower I, Makati Avenue, cor. H.V. dela Costa Street, Makati City, Philippines.

By authority of the Board of Directors:

(Sgd.) HERMOGENE H. REAL
Corporate Secretary

(PDI – Dec. 13 & 15, 2003)

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

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2 Motorized Wheelchair Brand New USA Complete accessories charger included Call 655-4838 ; 657-9356

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MALE/FEMALE

All around beautician txt 09173991968 ASAP

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JOB HIRING 09193352395 KC

MKTNG OFC STF 09208062187

OFC MKTG STF 09106014777 DITH

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

OFC MKTG STAFF 18-50yo w/pay T-4387472 Ms Olga

OFC STF/MKTG 09194306615 RICH

OFC STF/MKTG 09203562010 KYLA

PHARMACIST Look for KAKA Office. Hrs 9300749

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

CAREGIVER TRAINING 5271590 5276418 "Avail of the Special New Year Promo, Enroll Now!

AUCTION SALE

CY LOPEZ PAWNSHOP INC.
CAEG Bldg. #7611 Dela Rosa St., Makati City #602 JP Rizal St. Makati City #15 Gen. Santos Ave. lower Bicutan Taguig Real St. Almanza Uno Las Pinas City will hold an Auction Sale on December 20, 2003 at 9:00am including all items pawned up to July 2003.
- V. Zamora Jr. lic. Auctioneer
(PDI-December 13, 2003)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Alabang Country Club Certificate No. A-837 issued to Antonio R. Santamaria

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

FOODCOURT CHAIN Located in Leading Malls (4 Outlets) • 0917-5209651

RETIRE 2YRS 09189051567

RTW Wholesaler 3738821

RTW/Blouses P28.00 7274934

Smart E-Load Ez way 254-6708

Work By Phone, Earn Up 2 P30T/month! Female, 28&up! 892-7828

XMASLITES 3SETS/P100 Trees Ropalites toys 532-3909

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JEWELRY NO CAPITAL CONSIGN TRMS MUST B EMPLYD 9842865

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☎ 8114361 ☎ 8114370 ☎ 8114012 Fax 8925578
ST. ANTHONY'S BLDG., AURORA BLVD., QUEZON CITY
☎ 912-9008-11 Fax 912-9011
SM MEGAMALL, MANDALUYONG CITY
☎ 6350219 ☎ 6872354 ☎ 6872366 Fax 6350220
G/F TRINITY BLDG., 636 T.M. KALAW ST., ERMITA, MANILA
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OBITUARIES

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12:00 noon
Day before publication

Message of Thanks

We, the Family of the late

MARIA LUZ (Bayang) FABIAN vda. de FERNANDEZ

of Tarlac City

who joined our Lord on December 06, 2003

wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all those who offered Masses, prayers and flowers, visited and kept vigil, joined us in burial rites, and in one way or the other condoled with us and showed love and concern in our time of bereavement.

A 9th day Mass will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 14 at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Church, Barangay Central, Hacienda Luisita, San Miguel, Tarlac City.

Thank you so much. God Bless.

The family of the late

ENGR. FRANCISCO "PAQUITO" SOQUES SERAFICA SR.

Nov. 12, 1927 – Nov. 13, 2003

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who comforted and condoled with us, sent flowers and cards of sympathy, offered masses and prayers, visited and kept vigil with us, attended the funeral rites, and in many immeasurable ways joined us during our deepest hours of sorrow.

DEATH NOTICE

MARIETA R. AGUSTIN

Joined our Creator on December 12, 2003 at the age of 63.

Her body lies in state at Dulce Memorial Home, J. Abad Santos cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila.

Interment will be on Tuesday, December 16, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. at North Cemetery.

ZENAIDA GRAFILO CORVITE

Joined our Creator on December 10, 2003 at the age of 68.

Her body lies in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel, Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 14, 2003, after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Holy Trinity Chapel.

Message of Thanks

The family of our dearly beloved

VIRGILIO M. "VER" LUNAR

May 4, 1945 – October 30, 2003

extends our deepest gratitude and appreciation for the flowers you gave, for the prayers and Holy Masses you offered, for your messages of sympathy, for your overseas / local calls and text messages, for keeping vigil with us, for your words of comfort and for attending his funeral rites.

We thank you very sincerely.

ANTONIO LEONOR TOLENTINO

of Taal, Batangas and Las Piñas City

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 9, 2003 at the age of 71.

His wife **Josefita**; children **Arlene**, **Mayette & Joseph**, **Eduardo**, **Arturo & Imelda** and **Gerardo**; and great grandchildren **Patricia Marielle**, **Patricia Michelle** and **Angelica**, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Molave Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park), Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 14, 2003 at 11:00 a.m., Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

> **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."** - John 3:16

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

CLASSIFIEDS

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION
PDIC Extension Office, 6782 SSS Building
Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City
Telephone No. 841-4000; Fax No. 841-4930; Website: www.pdic.gov.ph;
Email: bacsecretariat@pdic.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) invites printers to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the printing of 700 copies of PDIC Book with an approved budget of P187,600.00.

The Instructions to Bidders and Terms of Reference are available starting December 8, 2003, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the BAC Secretariat, 9th Floor, PDIC Extension Office, 6782 SSS Building, Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino Street, Makati City, after payment of a non-refundable amount of P200.00.

Deadline for submission of bids is on December 29, 2003 at 2:00 PM at the same venue, afterwhich the opening of bids shall follow at 2:30 PM

The printer shall undertake the entire printing process within twenty one (21) working days from the date of submission of soft copy to the printer.

The eligibility screening bidders, evaluation of bids and awarding of contract shall be governed by Republic Act 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

A non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria shall be used in the eligibility check of eligibility documents.

PDIC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any informality or minor defect, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

PDIC shall in no case be held responsible or liable for any and all costs associated with the bidder's participation in the bidding process regardless of its results.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(FOR GOODS, SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS)

(PDI–Dec. 6 & 13, 2003)

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NOTICE TO ALL BUSINESS NAME REGISTRANTS

Pursuant to Section 12(A) of Department Administrative Order No. 15 Series of 1990, The Department of Trade and Industry through the bureau of trade regulation and consumer protection, cancels from the record all business name registrations which expired as of **JUNE 30, 2003 EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2004.**

Under the business name law (Act No. 3883), as amended, owners or proprietors should renew their business name registration upon expiration thereof.

This announcement serves as a formal notice to all concerned.
For strict compliance.

(Sgd.) **Asst. Dir. JAIME LASARO L. OLMOS**
Caretaker, BTRCP

(PDI - Dec. 13, 2003)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that the following Kenny Rogers Roasters Gift Certificates in **P100.00** and **P500.00** denomination bearing the **Serial Nos. A23901 to A24000 and B20201 to B20220**, respectively, were stolen.

In this regard, said Gift Certificates are automatically invalidated and will not be honored in all **Kenny Rogers Roasters branches.**

(PDI–Dec. 13, 2003)

Your career might only be a click of the mouse away.

JOB Market
www.jobmarketonline.com

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

Christmas Box Bazaar Year II
December 5 to 7, 2003
ATC Motortown, Fronting St. Jerome Church
Fri - 2pm - 12 midnight, Sat & Sun 9am - 12 midnight

Great Finds at Bargain Prices!!!
Sumptuous Meals to be enjoyed all day and night!
Raffle prizes from Scholastic Book Fairs, Wonder Toys, Cadbury, The Picture Company, & Citibank to be Won!!!

Yoyo Exhibition sponsored by Wonder Toys
On December 6, Saturday at 5:00 p.m.

Tinsel Town - A Toys & Gifts Fair
December 13 & 14 - Mall Hours
Alabang Town Center - Town Plaza

Bargain Hunting Bazaar - Dec 13 & 14
Playtime with the latest toys & gadgets - Dec 13 &14
Free Portrait Taking Sessions - Dec 13 & 14
Santa Claus Exhibit - Dec 13 & 14
Yoyo Competition & Games - Dec 13 & 14 at 4:00 p.m.
Story Telling Sessions - Dec 13 & 14 at 5:00 p.m.
Fireworks Display - Dec 13 & 14 at 7::00 pm
Children's Xmas Hats Off Parade - Dec 14 at 1:00 p.m.
Kiddie Fashion Show - Dec 14 at 6:00 pm

REGISTER YOUR KIDS AGES 2 TO 13 NOW! FREE!!
TEXT YOUR CHILD'S NAME & AGE
TO 0917-8160017/ 0917-9030523

FOR THE YOYO COMPETITION
REGISTER AT THE SITE ON DECEMBER 13.

Help fill the Chrismas Box with Goodies
for the children of Elsie Gaches.
(Donations of old or new toys & garments are requested)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Scholastic Book Fairs
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Automatic CENTRE

Visit
Tutuban Appliance and Furniture Fair
Level 3 PrimeBlock until Dec. 31

HOLIDAY shoppers need not go too far in looking for their Christmas presents for loved ones. Bazaars, trade fairs, and exhibits are all over the place. **Automatic Centre** , for one, is offering more shopping venues this season. In fact, they have three ongoing appliance and furniture exhibits in Metro Manila.

At the Tutuban Center Prime Block in Manila, a huge fully air-conditioned area at the third floor houses **Automatic Centre**'s appliance and furniture fair ongoing until December 31. If you are partial to particular brands, you'll find all the top brands have their respective booths, showcasing their latest models. It's the biggest selection of appliances, furniture, and houseware in Manila. Parking is not a problem as the Prime Block, which faces Claro M. Recto Avenue, has an integrated 7-level carpark at the back of the building. Best of all, you enjoy free parking (first 3 hours) when you buy P3,000 and up.

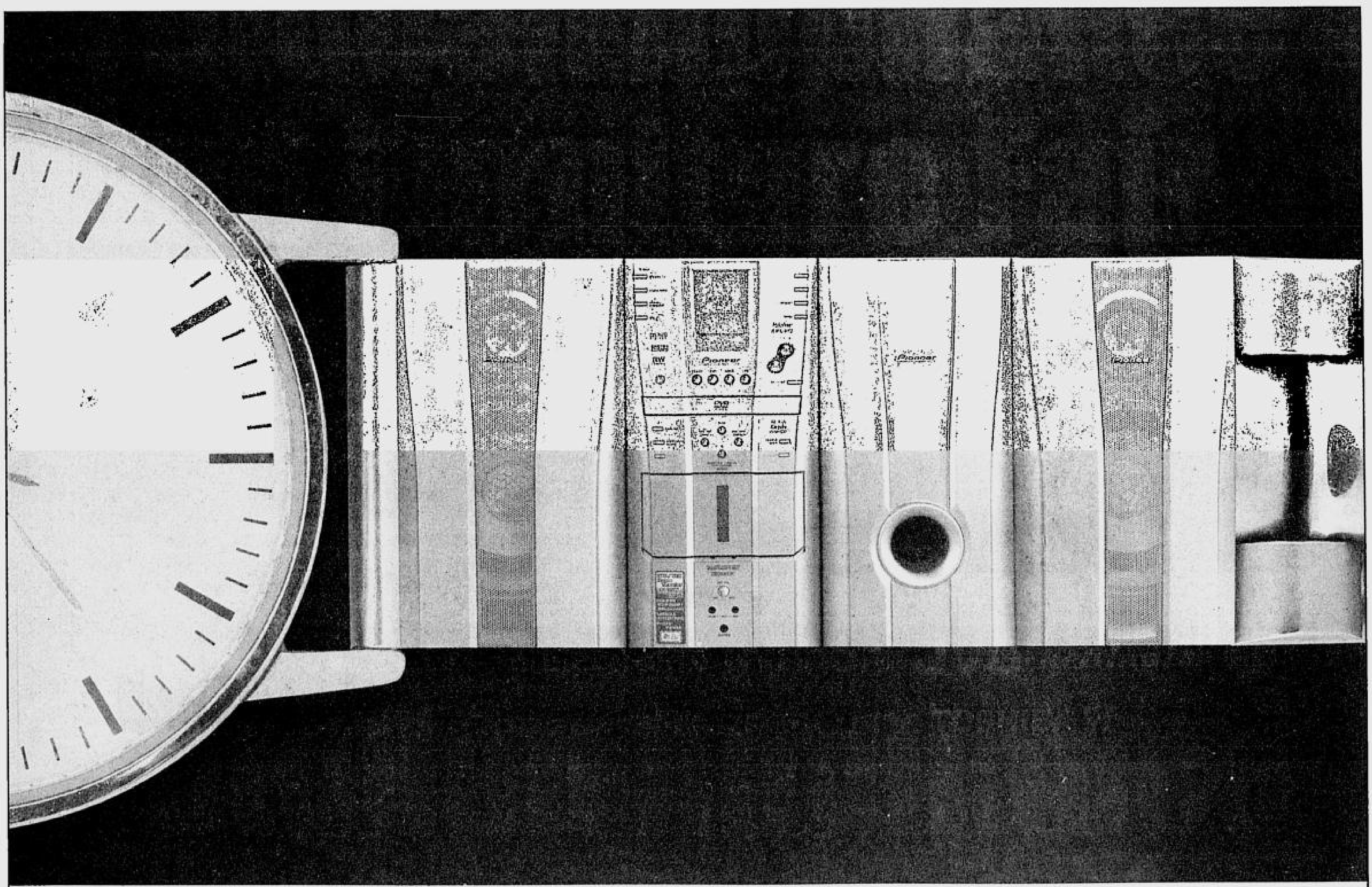
And while you're in Tutuban, check out the **Automatic Centre** branch at the ground floor of Tutuban Centermall, and the newly opened **Sogo Home and Office Center** on level two for even more choices of affordable furniture.

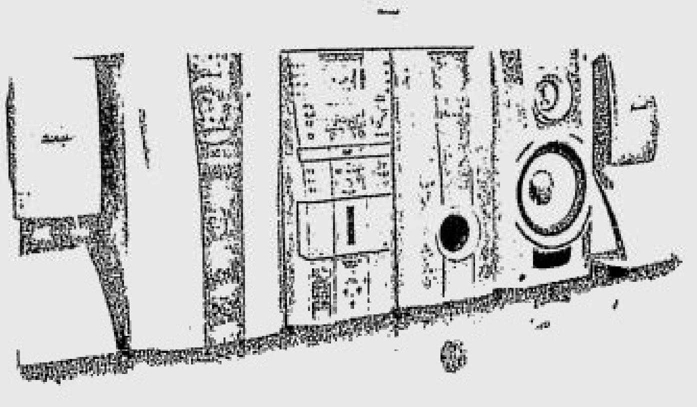
PLACE/B14

Drop by the
Christmas Appliance Furniture Exhibit

Federation Center Bldg.
Binondo, Manila
Up to Dec. 16

Carrier CONDURA ELBA Electrolux HYUNDAI JVC Kelvinator LG
MAGIC SING Panasonic PHILIPS Pioneer SHARP SONY TOSHIBA White-Westinghouse Whirlpool





EV61DVD

Round the clock DVD enjoyment.

It's time for hip entertainment with the new EV61DVD from Pioneer. Get up-to-the-minute viewing pleasure with a stylish 2nd generation mini-component system you definitely can't resist. Listen in style to the smooth sounds delivered by its 5.1 audio system with sub-woofer. The new EV61DVD from Pioneer. It's chic entertainment way ahead of its time.

Pioneer *sound.vision.soul* DVD VIDEO

Available at leading appliance stores. For more inquiries contact 852-0033; Fax: 851-3428; Email: mgme@compass.com.ph or visit us at www.pioneer.com.sg

Automatic CENTRE

Your place or mine

From page B13

Not too far away is another exhibit in the Binondo district. **Automatic Centre** and **Blims Furniture** are currently holding a Christmas appliance and furniture exhibit at the Manila Trade Center which is on the ground floor of the Federation Building on Muelle de Binondo street. Again, all the top brands in appliances and electronic audio-video are on display as well as the latest furniture by Blims. But you'd better hurry to this one because it's only until December 16.

If you prefer a more upscale location, why not visit the Holiday Appliance Fair at Shopwise Libis on E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue, Quezon City. Once more, the biggest appliance brands are represented, displaying their latest products for you.

On top of all that, **Automatic Centre** is running a Christmas-New Year raffle offer intriguingly entitled **Your Place or Mine Home Entertainment** promotion. Every P1,000 purchase gives a customer one raffle coupon for a chance to win appliance-and-furniture showcases.

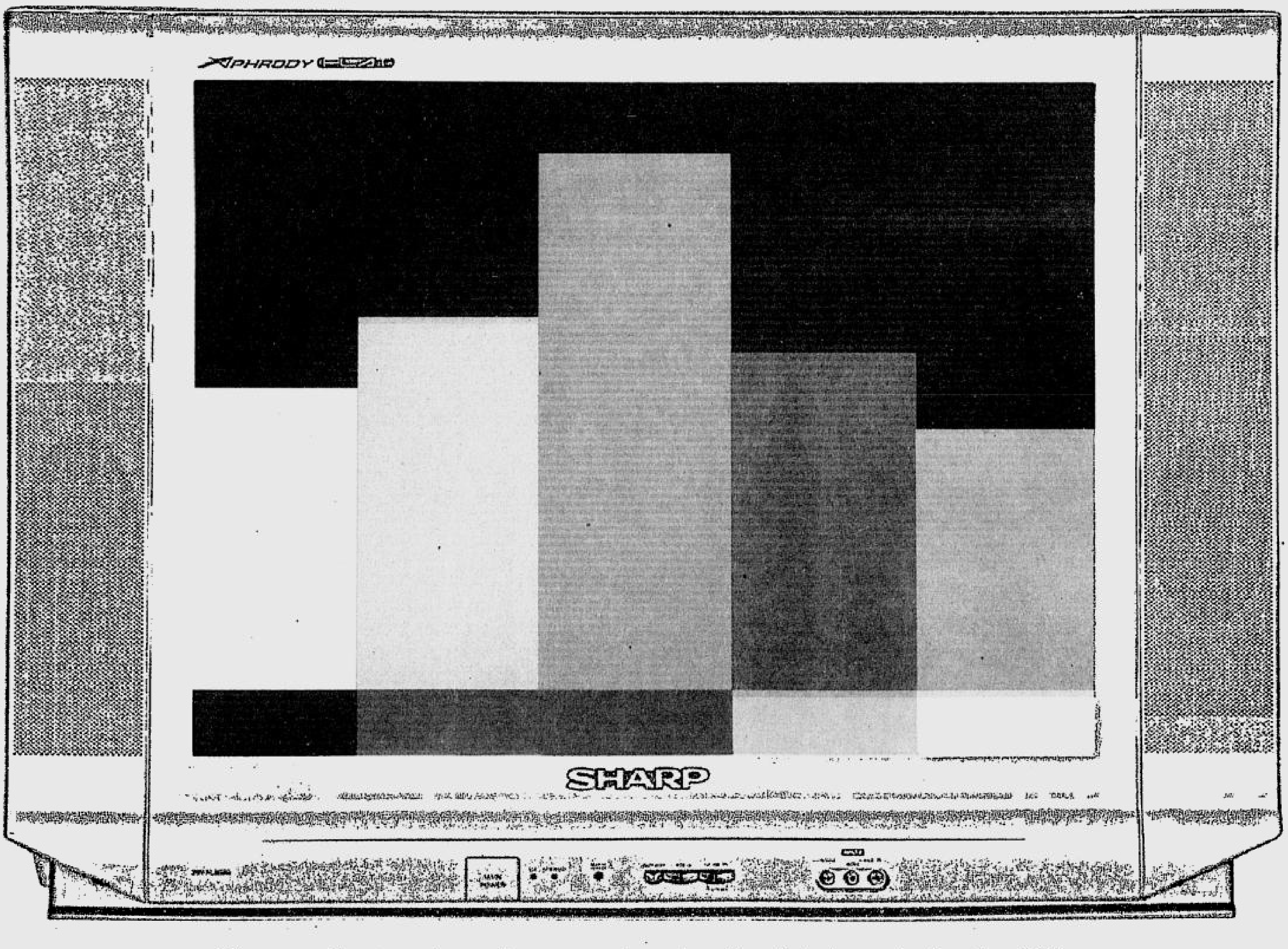
Also, for the big-ticket buyers (P10,000 and up), one-month **free** cable TV subscriptions are up for grabs, courtesy of Skycable and Home Cable.

At the exhibits and at **Automatic Centre** stores, **0-percent** interest offers on many appliances are available thru major credit cards. There is also the Warranty Plus option which allows you to extend the appliance's one-year factory warranty up to five years. Just pay once to enjoy your appliances longer, worry-free.

Automatic Centre Branches

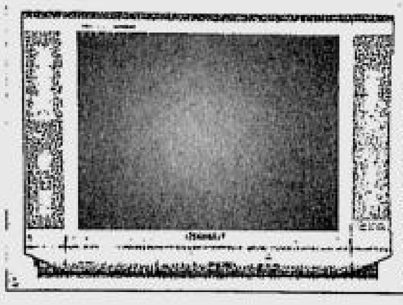
Ayala Ave. Makati Tel. 893-6543
Araneta Center Tel. 421-6319
Greenbelt I Tel. 817-9749
North EDSA Tel. 927-6747
Tutuban Center Mall Tel. 253-2029
Glorietta 4, Ayala Center Tel. 729-6450
Southmall Tel. 800-4529
Alabang Tel. 809-5981
Greenhills Tel. 705-1379
EDSA Central Mandaluyong Tel. 683-0891

0% Interest 12months on Sharp appliances in all branches

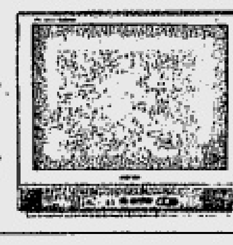


Figures show a sharp increase in sales for this brand of color TV.

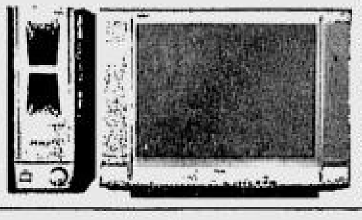
SHARP



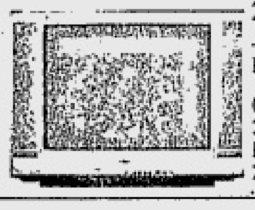
29V-FL350S
676 mm (29")
Aphrody Flat TV
Also available:
21V-FL350S
Aphrody Flat TV
508 mm (21")
MTS Stereo



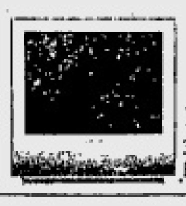
21V-FN90S
508 mm (21")
MTS Stereo
Space Saving
Horizontal Speaker
Also available:
21V-FN80M
Aphrody Flat TV
508 mm (21")
Horizontal Speaker



21V-L330XB
508 mm (21")
Primo X-Bass
MTS Stereo
Other 21-inch Primo models:
21V-L230S Primo MTS Stereo
21V-L110M Primo Dual Speakers
21V-L70M/ L75M Primo

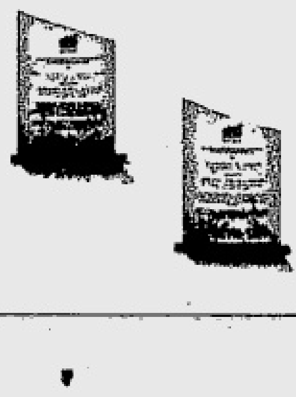


20V-L230S
480 mm (20")
Primo MTS Stereo
Other 20-inch Primo models:
20V-L110M
Primo Dual Speakers
20V-L75M Primo



14V-L75M
355 mm (14")
Primo Mono TV

Consumer Welfare Champion Award
Cream of the Crop Award
dti



SHARP SERVICE AWARDS
Quality service with every Sharp product.

Make breakfast a habit with Jollibee

HEALTH and nutrition experts say that breakfast is the most important meal for the day. Studies show that eating breakfast affects one's potential in performing better for the rest of the day. Skipping morning meals lead to loss of glucose, a substance which enables us to do physical and mental activities.

Thus, it is highly recommended that students and working adults who need to do a lot of concentration and comprehension in their studies or jobs should take breakfast regularly. Good thing Jollibee offers a variety of breakfast meals that you can choose from. It's a complete meal that goes with your choice of brewed coffee, tsokolate or cold drinks.

So, start your day right and enjoy the well-loved Pinoy breakfasts like the appetizing Arroz Caldo. It's steaming hot rice porridge with chicken balls and eggs that will surely warm the rest of your day. And when you're on the go, grab a great-tasting sausage patty sandwiched between tasty pan de sals.

Satisfy your sweet palate with the sugary Pancake with your choice of Chocolate, Strawberry or Maple syrup. For a fulfilling meal, get that langhap-sarap Longganisa, delectable Hotdog and juicy Corned Beef with garlic rice and egg that will give you a taste of authentic Pinoy breakfast.

And now, there is more reason for you to have breakfast everyday at Jollibee with the two new delightful additions to the breakfast rice meal line-up. Fuel up before a long and hectic day with tender beef slices of Beef Tapa cooked with a touch of the sweet Pinoy taste. This enjoyable treat is served with garlic rice and your choice of drink.

Burger aficionados can enjoy a sumptuous breakfast with the Breakfast Steak. The juicy patty is made from 100 percent pure beef smothered with mushroom gravy also served with garlic rice, egg and your choice of drink.

Enjoy these breakfast meals at affordable prices. So, take that healthy habit of having breakfast everyday. And look forward to a brighter day with Jollibee breakfast meals. Lalong sumasarap ang umaga kapag may Jollibee breakfast.

DRUG REHAB CENTER OPENING

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (center) officiated during the ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of the Negros Oriental Drug Rehabilitation Center during one of her trips to the South. With her in photo (from left) are Negros Oriental Vice Governor Jose Baldado, Negros Oriental Governor George Arnaiz, rehab senior counselor Jerome Villegas, PGMA, rehab senior counselor Arnie Teves and Negros Oriental Provincial Board Member Mariant Escaño Villegas

FREEMASONRY
Serving the Community
G

FREEMASONS DONATES TO TINAJEROS DAY CARE CENTER

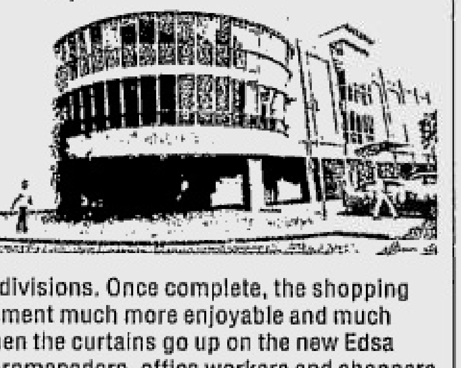
Labong Lodge #59, Laong Laan Lodge #185 and the Kamanava Travellers Club Inc under the jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines, recently donated raw materials for the repair of Tinajeros Day Care Center. Shown in photo are Freemasons representative WB John Teng, brother Peter Sy, Sonny Lim and president Jun Cunanan with the day care center staff.

ProductFILES

Hams of different shapes and sizes

ACCORDING to a trade survey conducted among retailers and consumers, there are at least five types of Christmas ham, classified according to shape and processing technology, sold in the market today. The traditional ham, which is made from whole pork leg muscle comes in deboned and bone-intact forms. This type is considered as the premium segment because of its good looks, lean meat, and savory taste. It fetches a price range of P250 to P260 per kilo. The deboned type or commonly called "Holiday Ham" is the most sought-after Christmas ham offering, accounting for more than half of the trade, according to the survey, eating up a big chunk of the corporate market. Companies prefer this type for gift-giving to clients and business associates. The bone-in type of the whole muscle ham category, commonly called "Chinese Ham" requires a more tedious preparation compared to the holiday ham. This old-time Oriental favorite is cured longer with herbs and spices to bring out an extraordinary flavor. It is even more expensive though. Another category which requires a special mold is the structured ham. Structured hams come in different names as the shape of the meat product implies. Consumers generally identify this hams as pear shaped, square, and round-shaped or hamon de bola. The structured hams offer more flexibility in weight range specification and are retailed in more affordable prices. Before buying ham, call CDO, the ham authority at 294-1111 locals 219, 251 or 230.

New Greenfield's Edsa Central Mall



GREENFIELD Development Corp decided to refurbish its flagship mall, the Edsa Central, when new malls began sprouting in the area and give its customer a bigger place to shop and dine. Slated to open during the holiday season, the new complex will have three main features: a three-level shopping, entertainment and dining plaza connected to the MRT station; an open-air jeepney park with more shop and restaurants, surrounded by bargain stores, service centers and fastfood outlets; and a wet market (the only one at the heart of a commercial and business district) that will serve residents of nearby villages and subdivisions. Once complete, the shopping complex promises to make shopping and entertainment much more enjoyable and much more accessible in terms of location and value. When the curtains go up on the new Edsa Central, young and old commuters, travelers and promenaders, office workers and shoppers will discover how the pioneering "mall at the crossing" - the new Edsa Central - once again redefines the concept of convergence, convenience and value shopping

Automatic CENTRE

IAJ - DOT SIGN MOA

Tourism has proven to be one of the few dynamic job creators both in developing countries and nations with high levels of development and income. In support of the country's tourism drive, In-A-Jiffy (IAJ) Enterprises recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Tourism (DoT) in promoting WOW Philippines campaign with the theme: "Sing Through The Philippines".

In-A-Jiffy will promote tourism in the country with introduction of its new product line the "Magic Sing Premium". IAJ's Magic Sing Premium will highlight Philippine tourist spots in each picture background of its Magic Sing Videoke Microphone. Such moves will further enhance the DoT's Volunteer 12 Program (V12) that seeks on tapping the estimated 7.38 million Overseas Filipino Workers as "Tourism Volunteers".

The V12 Program is envisioned will help revitalize in the tourism industry and at the same time help to create jobs for all Filipinos, improve their standard of living, and generate much-needed foreign exchange for the country.

IAJ's Olive Sanchez said, "This presents a golden opportunity for our country's scenic locations to be seen all over the world. Thus immediately exposing Balikbayans and tourist alike to our country's natural splendor. With Balikbayans, locals and foreigners as target market, and IAJ's wide distribution network, this will definitely bring tourists closer to our country's doorstep. Because each time our Magic Sing Microphone is used, our country's tourist spots will be promoted."

In addition, reports reveal that during the next two decades, the East Asia/Pacific region will reassume its position as the fastest growing tourism destination and the fastest growing generating market for tourist. Industry officials agree that these figures can only lead to one conclusion: Asia is the tourist destination of the new millennium,

For tourism related companies who are interested in joining IAJ's "Sing Through The Philippines" program you may call 405-0178 or email to sales@magicmic.com

Win the Appliance of Your Dreams for FREE! Absolutely nothing to buy!

DON'T you wish that this Christmas you could own that brand-new big appliance you've been dreaming about?

Now, you can win it for FREE! Simply visit the Automatic Centre, Sogo or Blims store nearest you by joining **Santa's Wish-a-Gift** promo!

Get your raffle coupon as you enter, fill it up and check the one appliance you want to own this Yuletide Season. Choose from a list of the latest and best brands in home entertainment plus other great appliances like a washing machine, air conditioner, refrigerator and more.

And on December 26, 2003, you could be that lucky person to win your dream appliance!

So what are you waiting for? No need to send your Christmas appliance wish to the North Pole. Rush to Automatic Centre, Sogo, and Blims up to December 24, 2003 and join **Santa's Wish-A-Gift!**

Get your raffle coupon as you enter, fill it up and check the one appliance you want to own this Yuletide Season

ELBA®
ITALY'S finest
Certified ISO 9001
Model: 66X350
SHOWROOM: MC HOME DEPOT
AVAILABLE AT ALL MAJOR APPLIANCE STORES

ELBA. 100% Italian Ranges for the Filipino.

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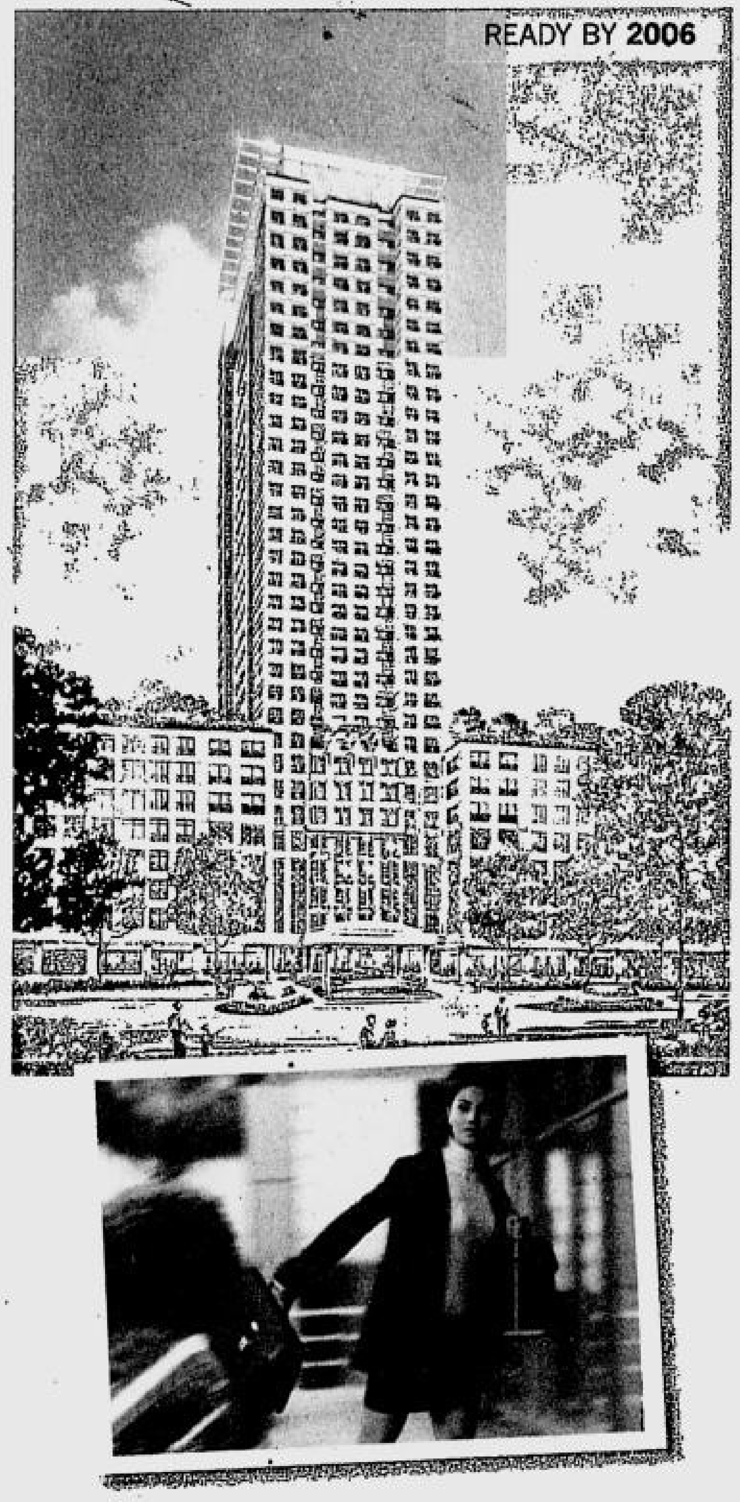
SUPPORT THE "2nd FILIPINO NETWORKING CONVENTION" Dec. 15 - 18 PICC, Manila

Three stunning addresses at Eastwood City.

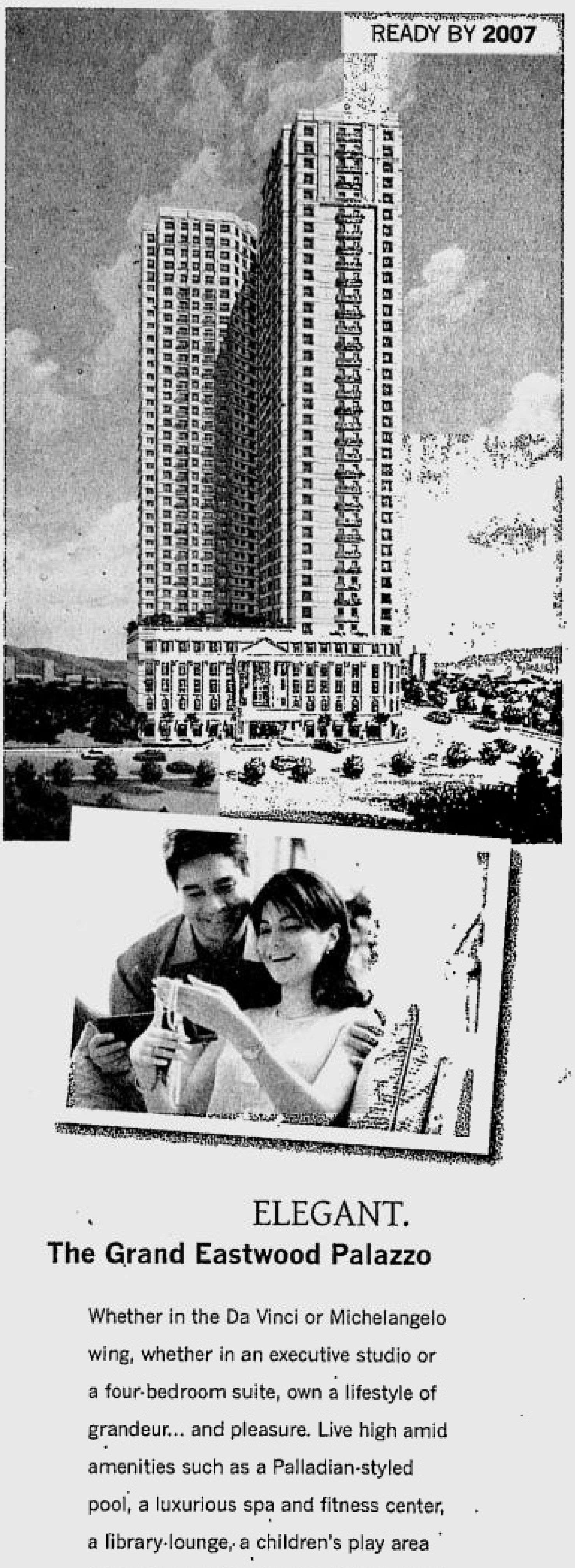
Choose the one that's right for you.



CONTEMPORARY.

One Orchard Road

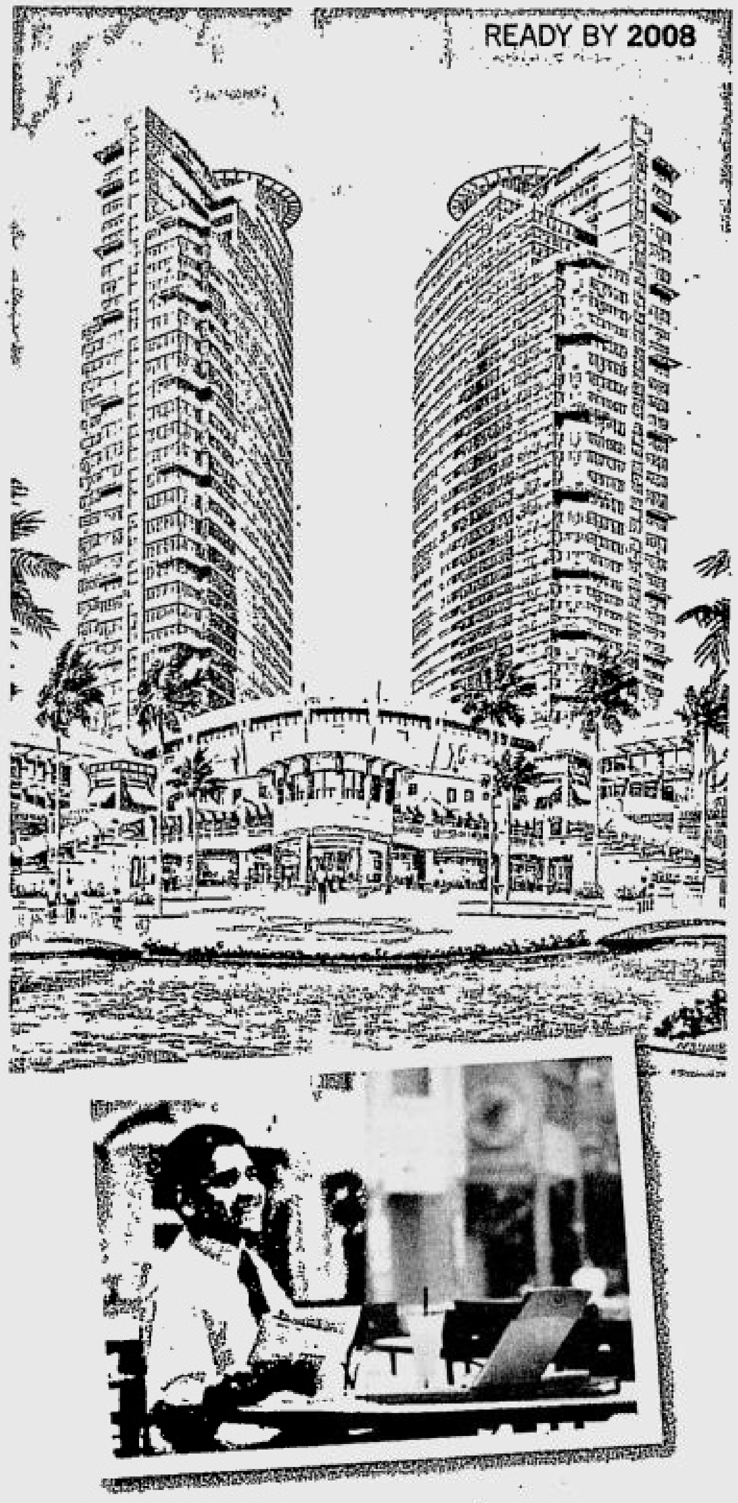
A three-tower address of vibrant style and sumptuous ease for successful young urban professionals. Pamper yourself in a deluxe studio pad or a three-bedroom suite. Feel young in a modern indoor spa. Relax in a lush tropical garden. Or shop in utmost comfort in an arcade at the ground floor.



ELEGANT.

The Grand Eastwood Palazzo

Whether in the Da Vinci or Michelangelo wing, whether in an executive studio or a four-bedroom suite, own a lifestyle of grandeur... and pleasure. Live high amid amenities such as a Palladian-styled pool, a luxurious spa and fitness center, a library-lounge, a children's play area and specialty shops at the ground floor.



HIGH-SPIRITED.

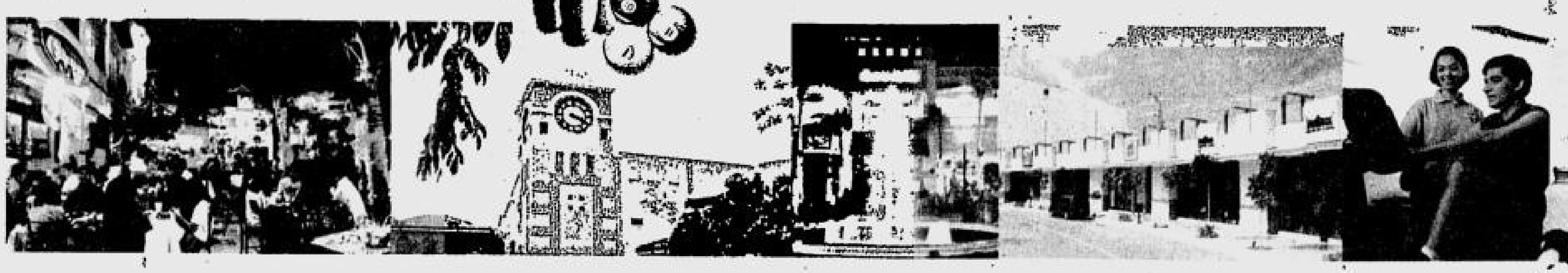
Eastwood Parkview

Feel the spirit and energy of downtown Miami in a home that celebrates nature and leisure. Savor life above a central park teeming with graceful palm trees, winding walkways and a sparkling lagoon. Enjoy dining and shopping in a four-story mall beneath your home. Or leave the world behind in your own playground with a swimming pool, gym, sauna and children's play area.

Each home yours for as low as **P12,000/month**

For more information or an appointment to visit the showroom,

Call **421-9272**



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Eastwood City

A Megaworld Development

ÉLAN

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2003 C1

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Natalia au naturel

By Marge C. Enriquez

The air is fragrant, and all day there's only the sound of roosters and tropical birds and the whirr of wings. The hacienda offers one rhapsodic vista after another. There was no way we'd photograph her elsewhere

IN today's frenetic age (and that's an understatement), newspaper readers, especially women, immediately turn to the "soft" sections, no doubt for some relief from reports of kidnapping, inflation and entertainment celebrities running for public office.

ÉLAN's pictorial with young **Natalia Zobel** in the family hacienda is one such relief—idyllic, though not necessarily escapist, much like social chronicler Slim Aaron's portraits of the elite in their milieu, taken in the 1950s through the early '80s. Aaron captured a lifestyle that, although exclusive and rarified, was quite uncontrived.

As in many of ÉLAN's pictorials, this one is marketing-driven. Gingersnaps is a successful line of children's wear that has captured the high-end market. Imagine two-year-olds in strapless or halter tops—the kiddie version of coquettish dressing. Now that the original Gingersnaps kids are 'tweens and teens, a second label, Just G, has evolved.

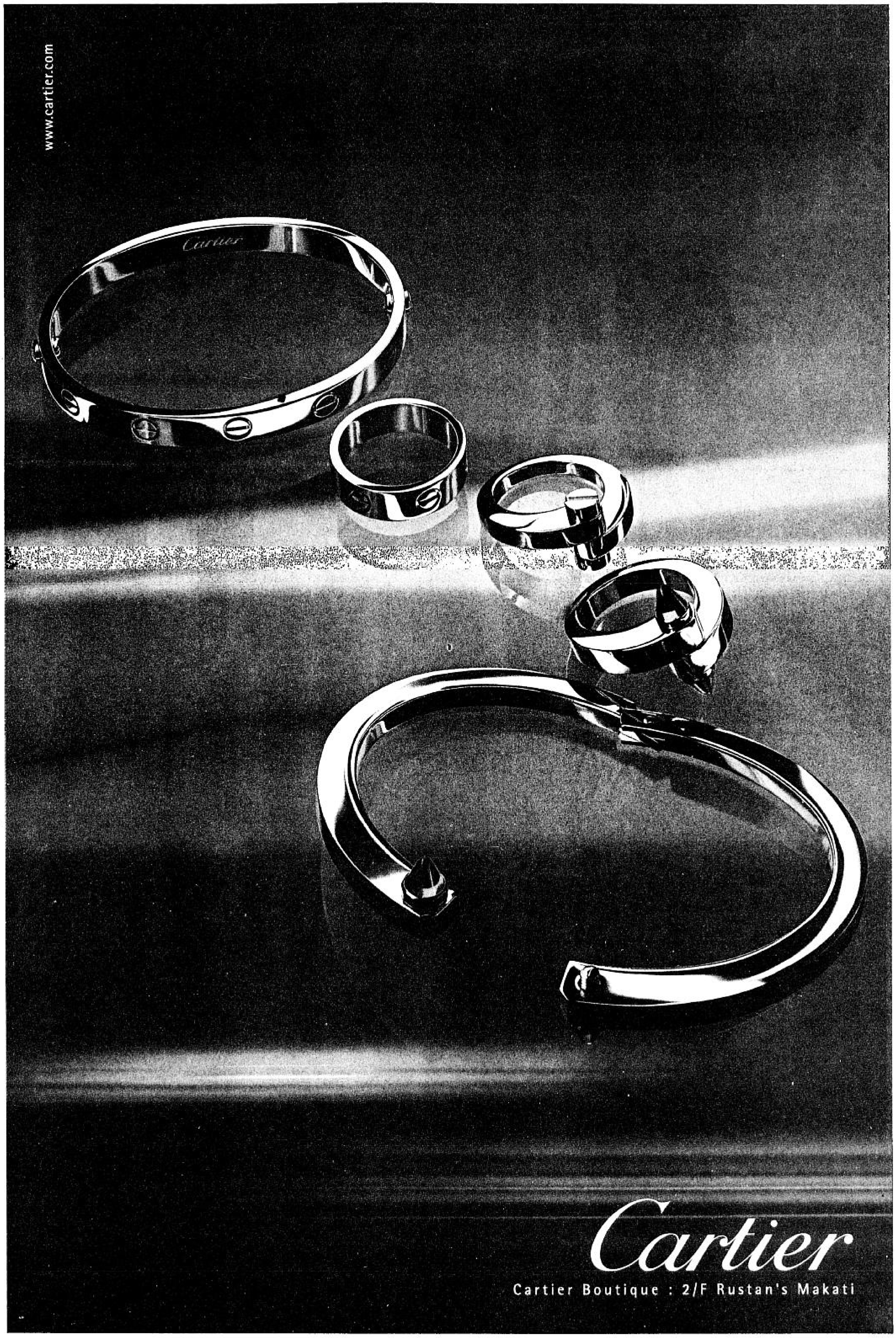
When the advertiser approached us for editorial support, the first person that came to mind for the shoot was **Natalia Zobel.** She inherited her Mediterranean looks from her parents, businessman **Iñigo Zobel** and former model **Maricris Cardenas,** known as the "Ken and Barbie" of the social set. Polo playing keeps Iñigo fit, while Maricris maintains her model-looks by brisk walking, weight training and Pilates.

Young dream

I met Natalia three years ago when I was interviewing her sister **Paola** and some equestrienne friends at their residence. Then 9 years old, Natalia watched intently as the older girls were photographed by **Raymond Lauchengco.** Her mother and I sensed that she wanted to join in the fun. Maricris mentioned that Natalia was interested in modeling clothes, like a schoolmate who had appeared in an early Gingersnaps ad. Lauchengco did some solos of Natalia as outtakes.

When I saw the

NATALIA/ C6



It is when we silence
the chattering
of our minds that we
can truly hear what is
in our heart and find
the stillness and purity
that lies within the soul.
Spiritual love carries us
into the silence of our
original state of being

CUT-OUT trapeze gathered on the hips with shawl in gray

ASYMMETRIC trapeze with hip sash over gartered pants

ALL IS CALM, ALL IS WHITE

DRAPED mini jumper with monoshawl and ruffled sleeves worn over silver tunic and gartered pants

TUBE dress with bamboo patterned attached shawl.

THE LATEST collection by knitwear proponent Lulu Tan-Gan (a.k.a. LTG) harks the innocence of silent nights, holy nights, when all is calm, all is ...white!

Well, not entirely. Aside from non-colors, the collection includes metallics such as tin, silver, gold, bronze, copper, down to the extreme—coal.

Bulky knits died with the padded shoulders. In the past few seasons, Tan-Gan has been producing soft knits that flatter the silhouette rather than add thickness. She uses synthetic yarns that are lighter and cooler.

Tan-Gan doesn't deliberately look for a reference. Her designs are based on the movement of the fabric.

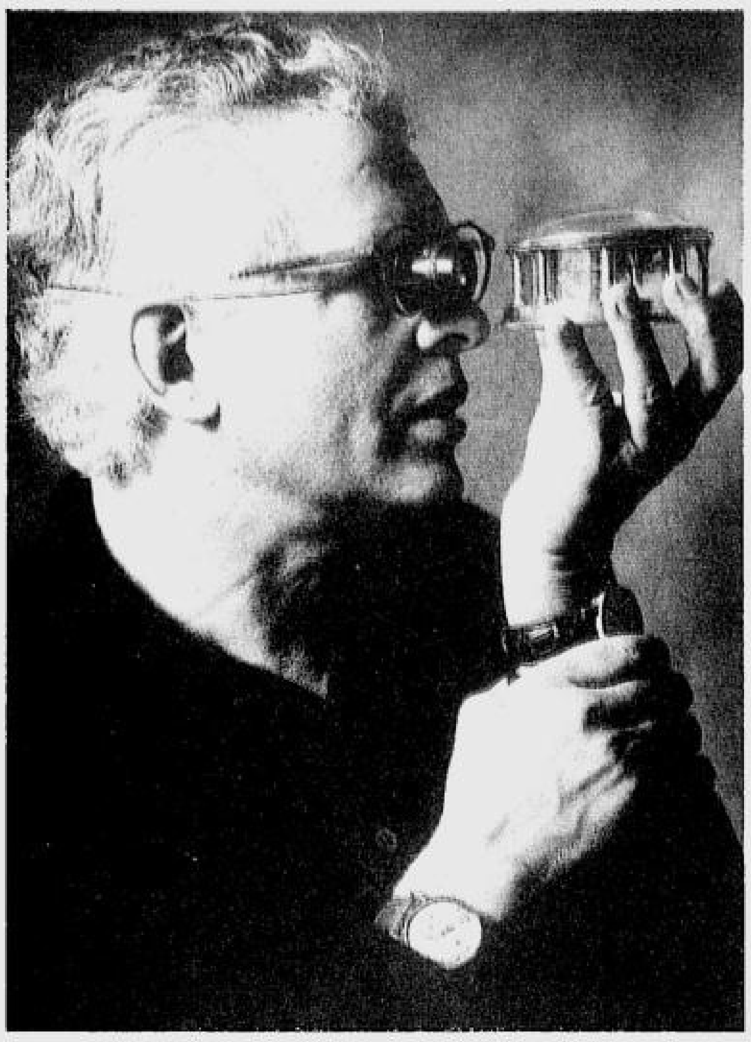
"The twist, the roll and the drape give the silhouette another dimension," she says. "I see Grecian influence with its asymmetry, draping, cutouts and layering."

LTG has no hard and fast rules for styling. Mostly cut on the bias, the knits give the wearer freedom to experiment with knotting, overlapping and tying. "You can also match them up with other materials and accessories, further expanding the multitude of ways that they can be worn."

Photos by Denise Wel
Pictorial direction by Antonio Salac Sa
Model: Rissa Sa
Hair and makeup: Dennis

AVAILABLE AT TAN-GAN FREESTANDING STORES IN SM MEGAMALL A, SM
FESTIVAL MALL AND AT THE LADIES' BOUTIQUE AT ALL SM DEPT.
MADE TO ORDER CLOTHES CAN BE ARRANGED THROUGH THE

Not for telling time



GERD-R. Lang finds himself in his work and his handicraft.

THIS image-driven world has acknowledged the wristwatch as more than a status symbol. It's become something of an identity card, just like the wearer's shoes and car. Thus, the discriminating male may not be averse to dishing out at least US$2,000 for a timepiece.

Gerd-R. Lang, founder of the Munich-based Chronoswiss watch company, has positioned his hand-made timepieces in the league of fine jewelry, occasionally even of playthings.

"The car is a toy for men. So is the watch. Nobody needs a watch for the time. All have this for time," he points to his mobile phone with the time set. "To tell the time, they look elsewhere, not their watch."

Lang recently visited Asia, Chronoswiss' fastest growing market, espousing the virtues of classical mechanical watches as opposed to the quartz watches of today. In the Philippines, Chronoswiss is carried by Lucerne watches. Observing that many successful entrepreneurs collected watches, the distributor added Chronoswiss to its luxury line.

Twenty years ago, Lang went against the tide of fashionable, battery-operated watches by producing the watches based on traditional craftsmanship. To this day he believes mechanical watches have more soul and are also more precise, being fastidiously hand-made, compared with quartz watches that are mass-produced.

Inspiration

For his ouvres, Lang draws inspiration from Englishman John Harrison, who invented the chronometer or mariner's watch. It not only told the time but also determined the ship's location on the high seas.

Lang likewise refers to 18th century French watchmaker Louis Berthaud's innovation of the regulator dial. Its main feature is the off-center location of the hour hand, which keeps it from overlapping the seconds hand. Although the regulator is used in places where telling the time to the "utmost second" is important, Lang adapted the unusual design using several subdials on the face for the distinguishing look of Chronoswiss watches. In 1987, the Regulatuer became a hit among collectors. The success was repeated with the Regulateur Automatique in 1990.

Lang says the dial and watch face decide the overall impact of a timepiece. He uses enamel dials for their aesthetic value instead of the modern galvanized metals. The manufacturing process is meticulous—from the soldering of the copper plate to the layering of the enamel, to the kiln-fired lettering, polishing and drilling of the dial.

The engraving resembles that of the antique watches which was considered a fine art. The hands are made from steel and other choice materials. They undergo a bluing process to result in the sleek cobalt shade. The hands are finely cut to proportion and then sharpened.

Making it tick

"The slight downward terminal curve minimizes parallax errors and maximizes the pleasure of telling time from an analog display," says Lang. Each line and numeral is individually placed by hand on the watch face.

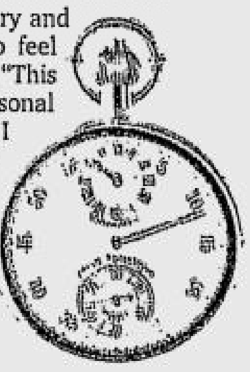
Aside from the expensive casing, the dial and hands, Chronoswiss bears other trademarks, such as the fluted bezel, onion-shaped crown and screwed starplugs, and sapphire crystals above the dial and in the back of every watch.

Lang points out that what make the Chronoswiss watch tick, literally, are the oscillation and escarpment, composed of wheels, springs and mechanical systems that provide movement for the watch and keep the time accurate, to the last second.

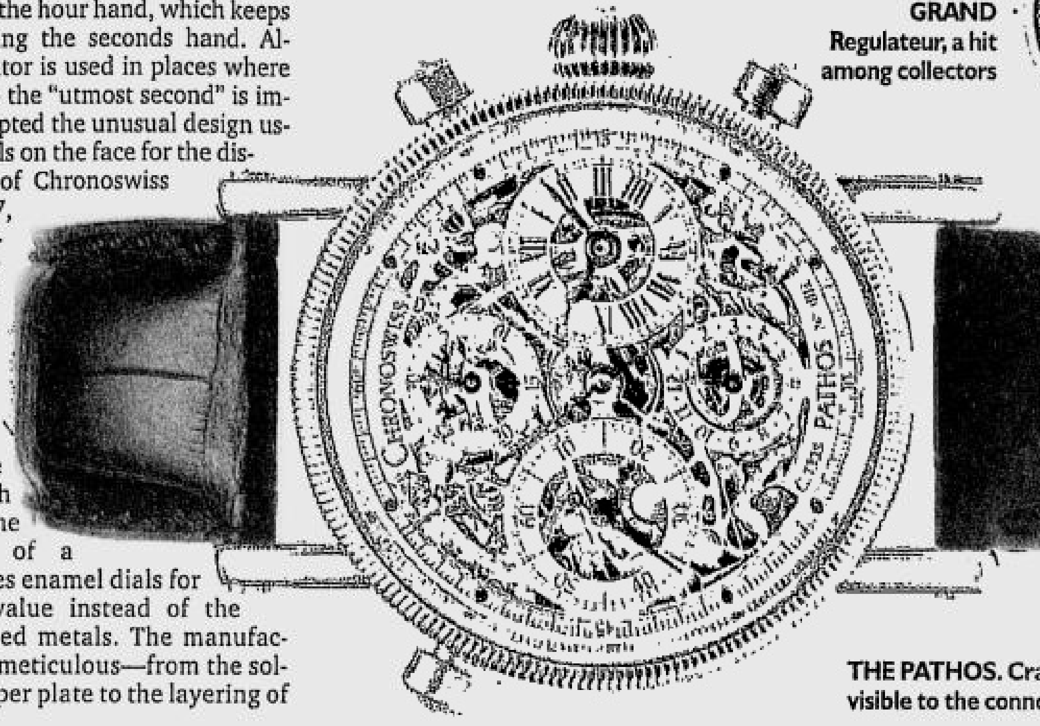
Talk about the adage, "Not a second should be wasted in the New Age."

For all the complications and attention to the minutest detail in time precision, the paradox is that a Chronoswiss watch is valued not for its function but for its form.

"What are jewelry and pearls for you? To feel good," says Lang. "This is a very personal achievement that I wear on my body."



GRAND Regulateur, a hit among collectors



THE PATHOS. Craftsmanship that is visible to the connoisseur's eye.

SHISEIDO

Visible spots disappear.

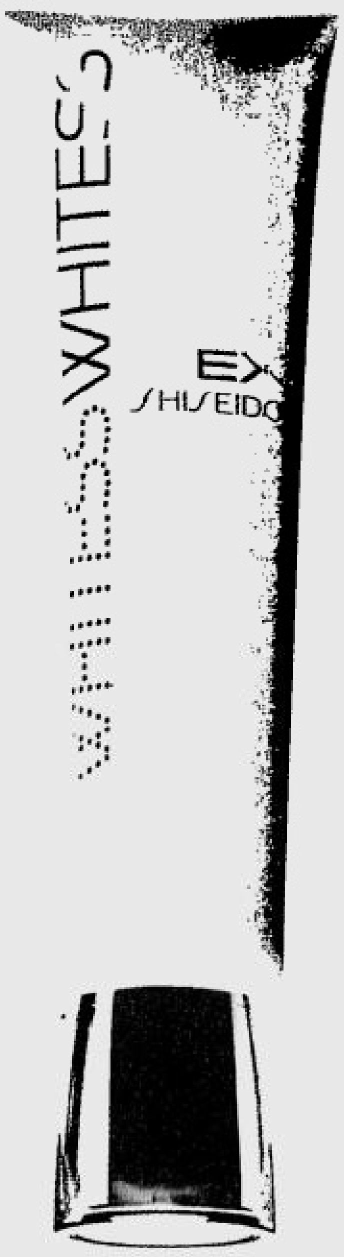
'Invisible' spots never appear.

Dark spots visible now. 'Invisible' spots forming beneath the surface of your skin that will appear tomorrow.

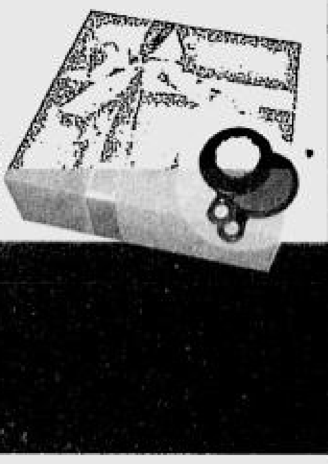
Shiseido understands that counteracting both is vital for a flawless complexion.

That's why Whitess works to fade existing spots as it prevents future spots with superior whitening skincare ingredients.

With Whitess, you will never need to worry about dark spots again.



SHISEIDO WHITESS W EX

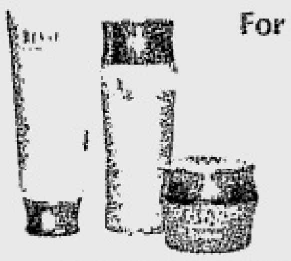


Shiseido's Christmas gift to you: every P3,500 purchase of Shiseido products entitles you to an elegant Shiseido gift box and a Japanese mirror.

Newly advanced WHITESS

The Beauty of Christmas

Share the beauty of Christmas with these lovely gift suggestions from Shiseido:



For Mom

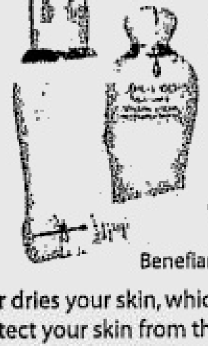
Revital Anti-Aging Products

The Revital skincare line neutralizes the three forces that damage her skin: aging, gravity, and environmental stresses. REVITAL skincare targets these three forces vigorously, to help her recapture and maintain skin that looks as young as she feels.

For the Party Animal

Shiseido The Makeup

Shiseido The Makeup has skincare properties, so it takes care of her skin while making her look beautiful for all the holiday parties. Fresh, vibrant eye and lip colors will make her the star of the holiday season!

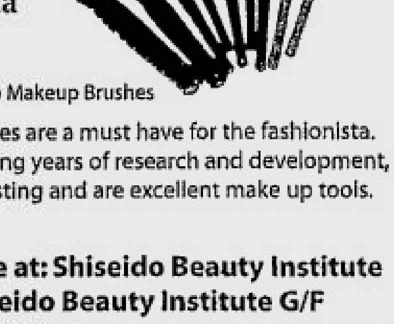


For the Frequent Traveller

Benefiance Skincare Line For Dry Skin

Cold weather dries your skin, which leads to fine lines and wrinkles. Protect your skin from the harsh elements of cold weather (both abroad and in your office!) with the Benefiance skincare line. This skincare line has luxurious textures and scents, so it soothes and moisturizes the skin as it indulges the senses.

For the Fashionista



Shiseido Makeup Brushes

Shiseido's make-up brushes are a must have for the fashionista. Created with Shiseido's long years of research and development, these brushes are long lasting and are excellent make up tools.

Shiseido is available at: Shiseido Beauty Institute 2/F Glorietta 4, Shiseido Beauty Institute G/F Power Plant Mall, SM North Edsa, SM Megamall, SM Makati, SM Harrison Plaza, The Landmark, Watson's The Podium

DOH-BFAD PERMIT NO. 1075 SERIES OF 2003

Give blessings

IN THESE times fraught with pressures and fragmented relationships, an ancient custom of giving and getting affirmations is being revived.

Human, the clothes and young lifestyle store, is bringing back this tradition, in which affirmations serve as greetings, like a handshake or a wave. Back then, no exchange was complete without such positive wishes that encouraged and, if one took them to heart, empowered.

Human imprinted on its t-shirts nifty sayings that make great presents, instead of the trite "Happy Holidays" or "Merry Christmas."

Give blessings to those you love.

PEACE
IDEAS
CHANGE

PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Lo

WITH hardly ar
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know; we roa
stretch jeans c
crotch area,

Stargate opens to a new world

By Georgina C Solina
Contributor

THE OMNIPRESENT Christmas *parol* (lantern) has more significance now than ever before. Its six-point, star-like formation symbolizes the Grand Sextile which is also referred to as the Star of David. Anyone with a Star of David in his or her chart is blessed. In the world of horoscope, this formation brings benevolence and miracles.

A total lunar eclipse in the Northern Hemisphere last Nov. 8 and 9 created a most remarkable event in the heavens: A Grand Sextile of planets showed a complete star, formed by two major planetary grand trines intersecting each other, one pyramid-like formation pointed heavenward, the other pyramid of planets pointed earthward.

Spiritual pundits, such as Drunvalo Melchisedek, believe that this event is an unprecedented event in history. It is also called a Harmonic Concordance because it symbolizes the divide which we struggle with, to unite the mystical with the scientific. There is a new pathway to travel. Scientific discoveries by Einstein, Podolsky, Rosen and Bohm reveal another universe to us. Doors are opening left, right and center to that universe which takes us beyond our limited knowledge of physical space and time. The study of psychology has led many scientists to spiritual inquiry. The language of the "new physics" has augmented spiritual debate. With no more reservations, people can now speak of God and science in the same breath.

The lunar eclipse and Grand Sextile last Nov. 8 and 9, accompanied by a lunar eclipse, has announced it: a Stargate that will inspire new directions in science and in our own lives, new perspectives. As we shift roles from observers to self-aware subjects, we move eastward, towards intuition as a natural field of study.

According to master guides, the worldwide shift in consciousness has prepared us for this entry into the metaphysical dimension or the cosmos of thoughts and feelings. As our thoughts radiate outward, they become powerful waveforms that manifest directly as realities or, in simple terms, miracles. If we understand the power of our thoughts, we can create the world that we want. Thus, the adage, "As I change, the world changes." If we radiate fear, then we will create a reality of fear. If we radiate love, then we will create a reality of love.

December marks the end of a very long cycle of darkness and eventually starts a new cycle. The changes we are going through actually began about 100 years ago, and will continue for some time in the future. In our own lives, just expect the unexpected.

For younger bones and body...

DRINK MILK -- ANY MILK.

Nutrition Facts
Time-Shield Nutrients

Butterfat	Softens and moisturizes the skin
AHA	Slows down the effects of aging
Vitamin E	Removes free radicals from the body
Caprylic Acid	Aids in the removal of dead skin cells
Zinc	Aids in collagen repair

Introducing, the skin mi

A whole body care system created to help you take the first step to achievir your dream beautiful, younger-looking skin. The secret is in ***goat's milk***. It' proven to be loaded with more essential skin nutrients than any other milk why it's called the skin milk Using the benefits of goat's milk, Milk + has ***Time-Shield Nutrients*** to give you smoother, softer and visibly younger-lookin when used everyday. So make ***Body Recipe Milk +*** your lifetime skin milk.

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RETURN TO WHAT IS REAL

ok, Human, no cracks!

y hype, Human has produced a line of jeans supe- d labels preferred by certified Fashion Victims. We d tested some of Human Jeaneration's styles. The llow more freedom of movement, especially in the than brands that cost 11 times more. And West Coast-based-dancer Grethel Domingo can execute splits without cracking seams and zippers! This goes to show that most consumers have been paying for salesmanship and marketing the high price that they should be paying for function and performance.

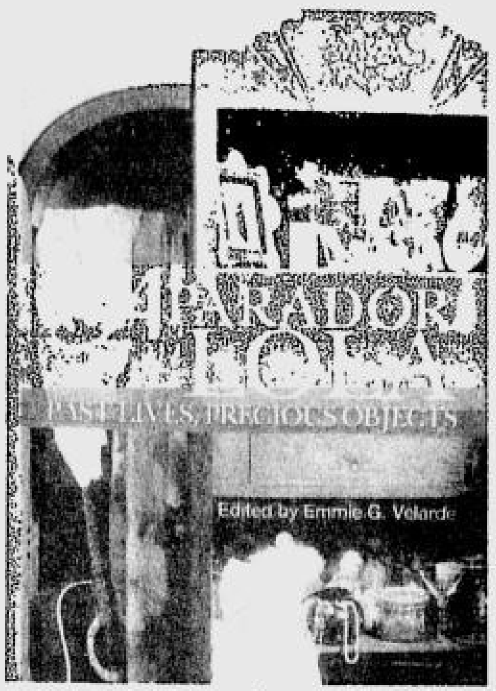
PHOTO BY PATRICK UY
MODEL: GRETHEL DOMINGO
SHIRT: ADIDAS 2004 COLLECTION
MAKEUP: MIKEE RAYMUNDO

Ties that bind

BOOK REVIEW

By Cherish Garcia-Hernandez, *Contributor*

Aparador ni Lola
Past Lives, Precious Objects
Edited by Emmie G. Velarde
Anvil Publishing



This anthology about grandmothers, an admirable undertaking, is an absolute joy to read and re-read

SOMETIME in the 1980s, my grandparents relocated to the United States and my grandmother's *aparador* (armoire or closet) somehow ended up in my room. It was a bulky piece of furniture but it had a lot of space and a full-length mirror so I didn't mind. Made of dark *narra* and fitted with beveled glass, this piece of furniture added character to my bedroom and silently watched, I imagine, as I went through the growing pains of ages 14 to 26.

When I left home, my mom moved it to her room and the trusty *aparador* went full circle as it found its way back to my grandmother when she came back to Manila. Like most antique *aparadores*, it had a secret compartment. I used to store my diaries there and it never occurred to me to ask my grandmother what she had used the compartment for.

After reading "Aparador ni Lola" I regretted not delving further into my family history and my ancestors' past lives. An excellent collection of essays from a diverse group of authors and edited by Emmie G. Velarde, who wrote an essay herself, "Aparador ni Lola" effortlessly opens the door to memories of the past, using the *aparador* as a metaphorical portal, if you will.

Honesty, affection

What better item to symbolize one's memories than the ubiquitous *aparador* that every *lola* (grandmother) seemed to possess? After all, most of the time, its contents were souvenirs of a bygone era, a hodgepodge collection of jewelry and memorabilia that provided evidence of a life that once was. To paraphrase an obscure New Wave band, "The-The," these memories hold your life together like glue.

Jose Javier Reyes, who contributed a wonderful story about his *Lola* Tating, says, "Manila has no culture of memory. There is nothing around us that gives a sense of roots." This is such a painful truth. With a past as rich and diverse as ours, we need to record the oral history passed on to us through stories told by our parents and grandparents.

In the same way that I had loved listening to my late *Lola* Eding (my grandfather's sister) as she regaled us with stories about my great-great grandparents that were far more interesting than any telenovela, I was fascinated by the stories that these authors had to tell. Not only could I relate to the many similarities (apparently all *lolas* that lived through the war were in the habit of hoarding); I also got glimpses of the past and how people lived back then.

Likewise, I realized that even though we, supposedly modern women, tend to raise belittle the lives that our grandmothers led in subjugation as housewives and child-bearers, they were doubtless strong women who survived many things we cannot possibly endure today.

From Myrna Adriano's vivid descriptions of her *Lola* Lucia's courage in the face of war in her essay "The Commissary," to fascinating legends of how the surname Calupitan came about in Lolita Delgado Fansler's "A Toast to *Lola*," to moving poetry by Babeth Lolarga in her haunting "Rot In the Castle"—each and every contribution is a treasure in itself and a testament to wonderful women who may be gone but not forgotten.

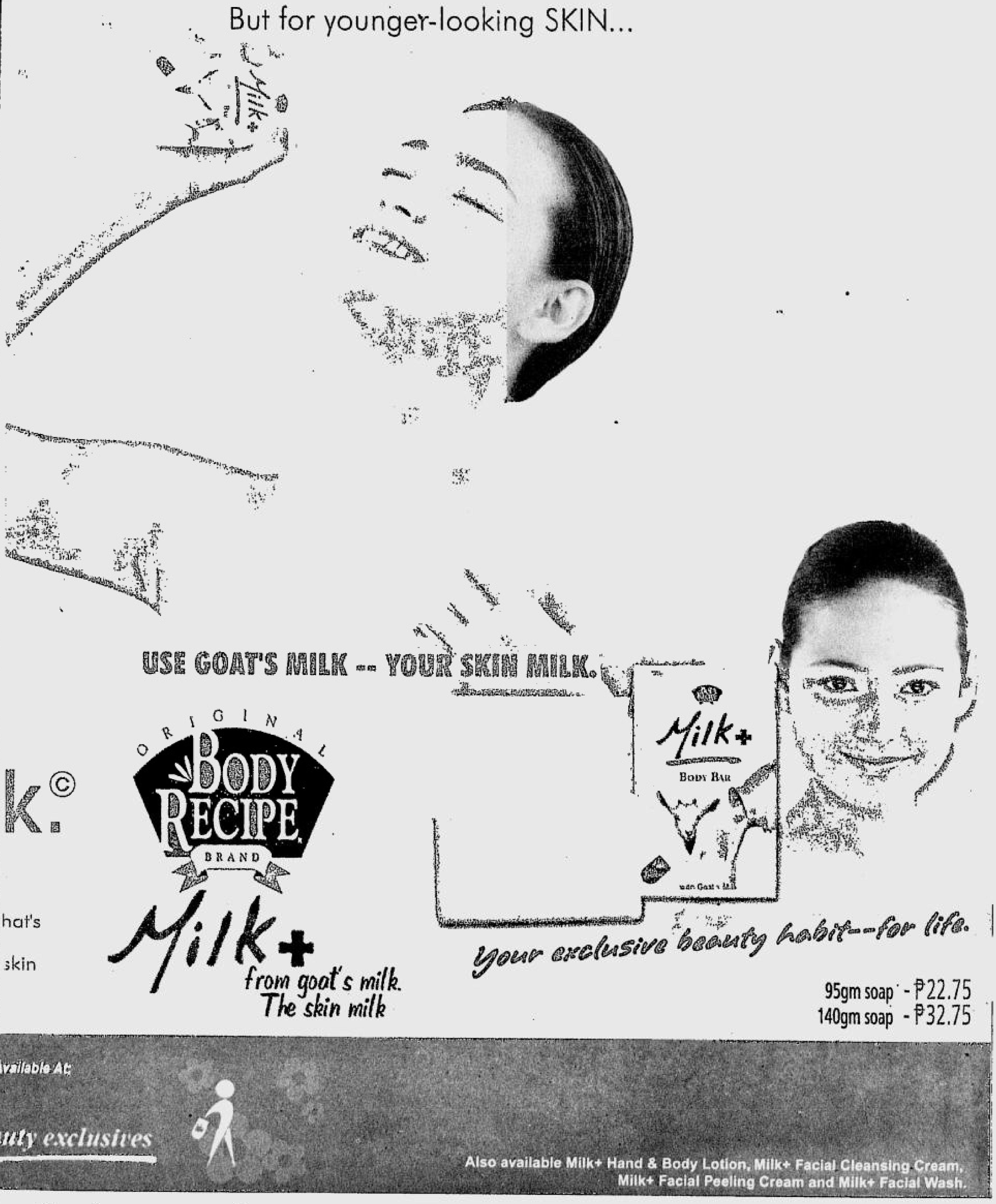
The honesty and affection in the authors' recollections resonate through the pages of this thin volume that weighs so much more in content. Even the cover, a photograph of an *aparador* bathed in golden sepia light, is gorgeous. Running the gamut of every conceivable emotion, the stories in "Aparador ni Lola" throb with humor, pain, happiness, suffering and, most important, the simplicity of life and the strong family ties that bind Filipinos all over the world.

Admirable undertaking

Like any good book would, "Aparador ni Lola" made me reminisce about my own grandmothers. I thought about my maternal grandmother, Mamagrand, from whom I inherited my feistiness, and who is still around. Already widowed, she spends her time playing mahjong and going to church, two contradictory interests she has indulged in as far back as I can remember. In spite of very poor eyesight, she has stayed strong and lucid and vain as ever, always dressed and powdered, and exuding a faintly sweet scent of perfume.

I also remembered my father's mom, whom I called Ma and who owned the *aparador* that I "inherited" for a while. Ma was always cooking the most amazing dishes, and her kitchen would miraculously churn them out from lunch to dinner. My happiest memories were the Sundays I spent at her house where the whole Garcia clan would get together while partaking of the gastronomic feasts. In her old age, Ma stopped cooking, and that signaled the end of my childhood. I saw her breathe her last eight months ago, with all her loving children around her.

Sometimes we need to look to the past to understand the present. "Aparador ni Lola" is an admirable and ingenious undertaking that should be read and re-read. With 17 talented authors taking turns at reflecting on what their *lolas' aparador* meant to them, this anthology definitely does not disappoint. It is a wonderful book to own or even to give as a gift. Not only is it an absolute joy to read, it also serves as a reminder that life goes on and that one day, we will be grandparents, too. Hopefully by then, our lives would have been as rich and purposeful as those of the grandparents that had come before us.


But for younger-looking SKIN...
USE GOAT'S MILK -- YOUR SKIN MILK.
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ORIGINAL BODY RECIPE BRAND
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from goat's milk.
The skin milk
Milk+ BODY BAR
your exclusive beauty habit—for life.
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vailable At:
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Also available Milk+ Hand & Body Lotion, Milk+ Facial Cleansing Cream, Milk+ Facial Peeling Cream and Milk+ Facial Wash.

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From page C1

pictures, I was surprised at how natural she was in front of the camera. Those outtakes made me want to do a photo essay on how a child could teach adults to look at things from a fresh vantage point.

The opportunity came with a shoot for the Just G. label. I strongly felt Natalia should be photographed in her most natural element—and in her home province.

Natalia is the perfect choice. She grew up with Gingersnaps, and is now in that *dalagita* stage where she wants to dress up like her older sisters. Just G. clothes, feminine and flirty, suits her.

When we met again, Natalia, now 12, was shy at first. But when she got out of her shell, the confidence emerged. After all, I learned, she's an honor student.

For this shoot, there were such deliberations as, why make it difficult? Why go out of town instead of using photographs of Gingersnaps' image model, 18-year-old **MYX VJ Heart Evangelista**? If we must have Natalia, why not just shoot in Makati?

Pastoral setting

A few years ago, I wrote about Iñigo's weekend home which has been featured in many publications, including "Tropical Living."

Any visitor to Calatagan would quickly realize why many people make this place a weekend retreat. The air is fragrant, and all day you hear only the sound of roosters and tropical birds and the whir of wings, not the honking of horns.

A tree-lined road leads to the hacienda that offers one rhapsodic vista after another, of hardwood trees and rippling greenery. The undulating landscape looks peaceful in very direction. As the sky brightens, the panorama spreads out to a vast specter. The sun swings high over the pasture where sheep graze.

On the weekend of our shoot with Natalia, hay was being harvested for the horses in the stables. Shadows angling across the field indicated that the sun was headed for the other side of the mountains.

HORSING AROUND. On Natalia: blue linen obi-inspired sleeveless top with white stitched details and white cotton satin full pants; reversible fisherman's hat, blue chakra bracelets. On Rocio: pink mini floral overlet

Natalia au naturel

Photos by Wig Tysmans • Pictorial direction by Antonio Salac Santos

Models: Natalia and Rocio Zobel
Hair and makeup: Dennis Tan
CLOTHES: JUST G AND GINGERSNAPS. JUST G IS AVAILABLE AT ALL GINGERSNAPS STORES IN MAJOR MALLS
LOCATION: CALATAGAN, BATANGAS
SPECIAL THANKS TO IÑIGO AND MARICRIS ZOBEL

JUMP FOR JOY. On Natalia: White poplin Chinese-collared top and dusty pink cargo pants with drawstring, chocolate and beige beaded bracelet, lilac beaded wire bracelet. On Rocio: pink fern print baby collar dress

EASY RIDER. Obi-inspired backless top with chocolate brown ribbon belt and khaki cargo pants with drawstring; chocolate and beige cut beads bracelet

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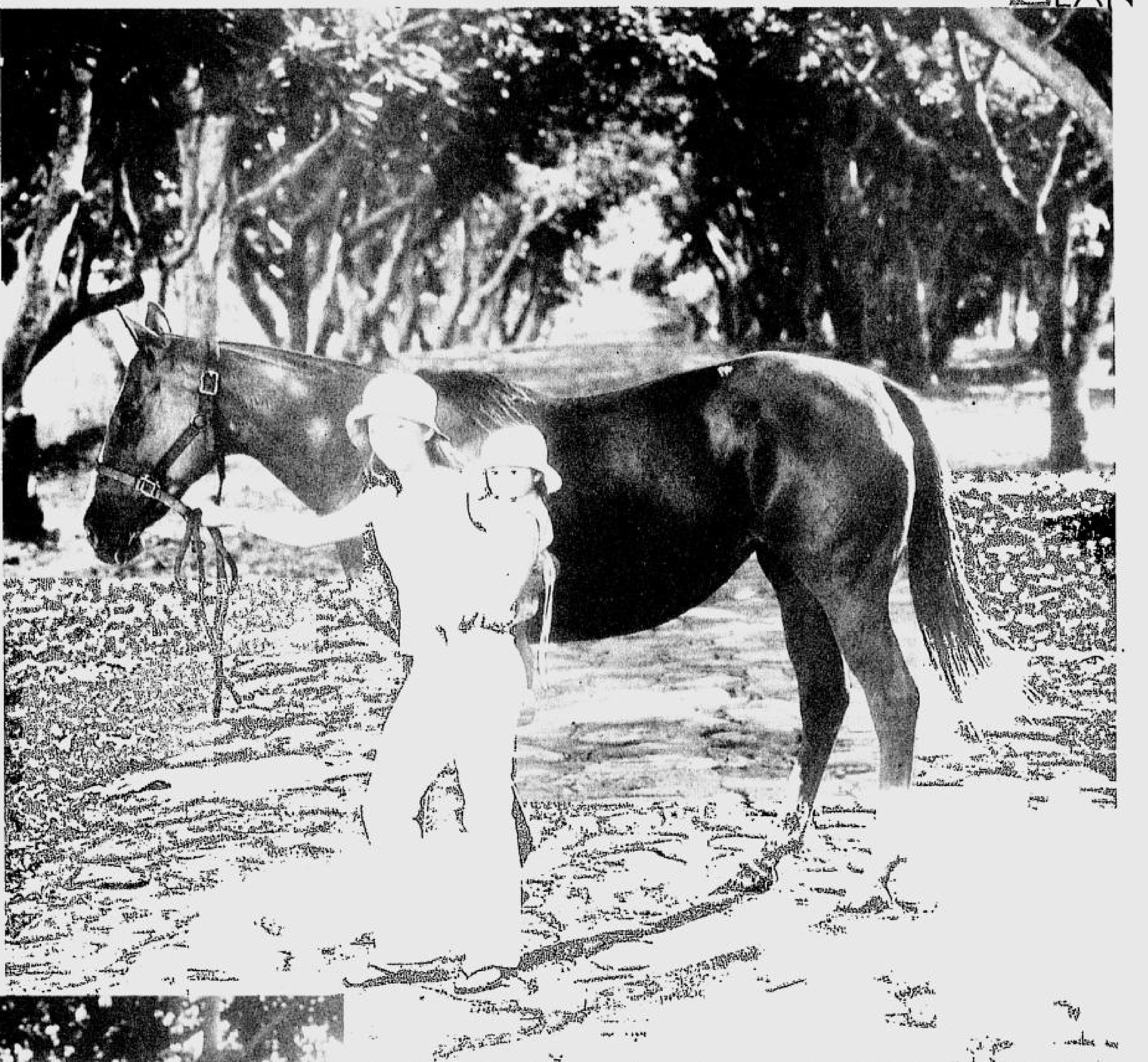

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Calatagan's balmy air inspired photographer **Wig Tysmans** to shoot Natalia in a pastoral setting. The pictures evolved from a childlike Natalia jumping from a trampoline to a teenager with an attitude on the tractor. Stylist **Dennis Tan** waxed lyrical over Natalia who, to him, looked like a young Veruschka.

Joining the pictorial was Natalia's little sister **Rocio** who, at 18 months old, already shows signs of being a go-getter.

Unforgettable

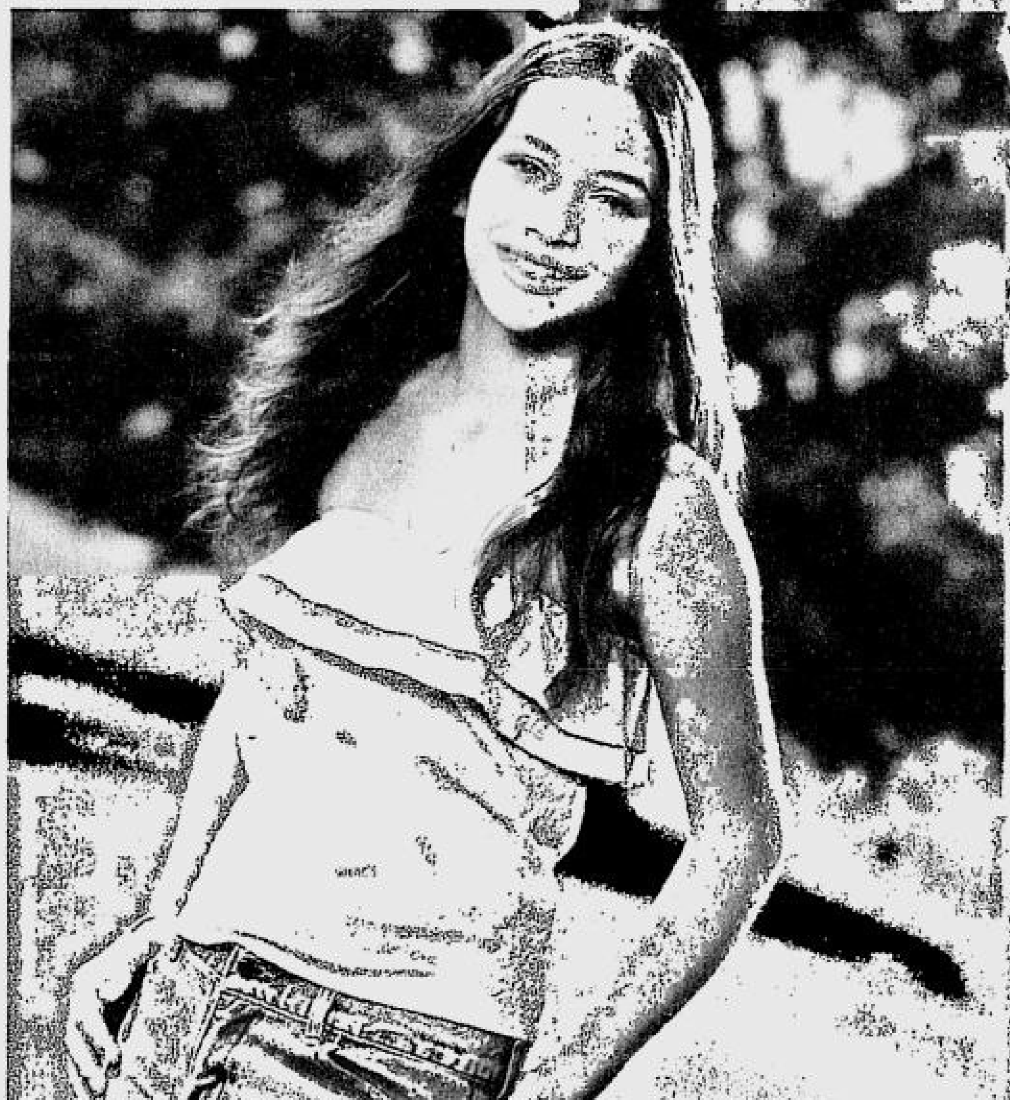
Maricris, our solicitous hostess, regaled us with stories and served us an unforgettable home-cooked meal. All day we drank farm-fresh *dalandan* juice. For lunch, the crew enjoyed *patatas fritas*, grilled chicken, angel hair pasta *pomodoro*, organic string beans julienne and, for dessert, *leche flan* and crispy *saging na-saba* in coconut milk, with Spanish mint tea and *barako*. We ended the shoot with another round of fresh juice and Calatagan's *pan de coco.*

For just one day in the country, as Natalia was portrayed growing into adulthood, the team slid back into childhood. Away from the responsibilities of work and the madness of Manila, we experienced the province's marvels, our senses were quickened, and our imagination was unbound.

The inner child in each one was roused, encouraging new ways of perception.

> To experience life directly like a child does is a must-do for relaxation

JUNGLE JANE. Green leaf-printed pin-tucked top and fatigue cargo pants with drawstring; militia green and beige cut beads bracelet



PATINA green dotted voile strapless top and jeans with rose detail

Just look: Just G!

IN THE midst of a volatile economy, clothing makers and retailers are eyeing younger consumers to boost their bottom lines. In the United States, teenagers spent an estimated $170 billion last year.

Teen spending power is redefining the marketing tacks of many of today's best-known brands.

"Many believe that tweens (children just shy of their teen years), teens, and many collegians are among the most desire-oriented consumers for multiple industries," says an American global market information firm that researches on product sales and consumer patterns. "They have bigger wallets of their own and more money is spent on them by their parent than on previous generations, and they seem to spend their allowances on a plethora of pricey items—electronics, travel, sports gear, coffee, bottled water, entertainment and style."

Just look at the promotions of telecommunications companies and glossy magazines geared for the young market. Or look at how malls are creating special events for the "youth quakers" or how soft drink companies re-launched have familiar brands with some twist. Children of Baby Boomers—today's youth or the so-called Echo Boomers—demand brands that reflect their identity.

Gingersnaps, a local garment company that catered to toddlers and children has created a new line, Just G, for girls between 12 and 18.

The styles are flirtatious, feminine and colorful yet classy and, most important, moderately priced. Some styles have influences of Donna Karan's subtle sexiness, Marc Jacobs' colors, Shanghai Tang's frog buttons, Liberty prints. The latest collection recalls resort dressing in Hyannis Port, what with the cargos, peplum halter tops, and classic white cotton blouses. Merchandising of the line resulted in an unexpected "boom, boom effect." Kids wanted to dress up like their older sisters; mothers, on seeing clothes by Just G, wanted copies of the teen daughters' styles in their size!

WATER CONSUMPTION REDEFINED

REVOLUTIONIZING WATER USE TWICE OVER.

Half Flush Full Flush

C341DB(G) Round Front

C343DB(G) Round Front

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STACY / SELINA BATHROOM PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Water Closet
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Allyssa L245P Pedestal Lavatory

COLOR	PACKAGE PRICE
WHITE	P 8,160.00
PASTEL IVORY / HARVEST BEIGE	P 8,520.00
DEEP RED	P 10,320.00

Note: Only White bowl models come with Cefiontect.

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Calatagan's balmy air inspired photographer **Wig Tysmans** to shoot Natalia in a pastoral setting. The pictures evolved from a childlike Natalia jumping from a trampoline to a teenager with an attitude on the tractor. Stylist **Dennis Tan** waxed lyrical over Natalia who, to him, looked like a young Veruschka.

Joining the pictorial was Natalia's little sister **Rocio** who, at 18 months old, already shows signs of being a go-getter.

Unforgettable

Maricris, our solicitous hostess, regaled us with stories and served us an unforgettable home-cooked meal. All day we drank farm-fresh *dalandan* juice. For lunch, the crew enjoyed *patatas fritas*, grilled chicken, angel hair pasta *pomodoro*, organic string beans julienne and, for dessert, *leche flan* and crispy *saging na saba* in coconut milk, with Spanish mint tea and *barako*. We ended the shoot with another round of fresh juice and Calatagan's *pan de coco*.

For just one day in the country, as Natalia was portrayed growing into adulthood, the team slid back into childhood. Away from the responsibilities of work and the madness of Manila, we experienced the province's marvels, our senses were quickened, and our imagination was unbound.

The inner child in each one was roused, encouraging new ways of perception.

To experience
life directly
like a child does
is a must do
for relaxation

JUNGLE JANE. Green leaf-printed pin-tucked top and fatigue cargo pants with drawstring; militia green and beige cut beads bracelet

PATINA green dotted voile strapless top and jeans with rose detail

Ju[illegible] Ju[illegible]!

IN THE midst of a volatile economy, clothing makers and retailers are eyeing younger consumers to boost their bottom lines. In the United States, teenagers spent an estimated $170 billion last year.

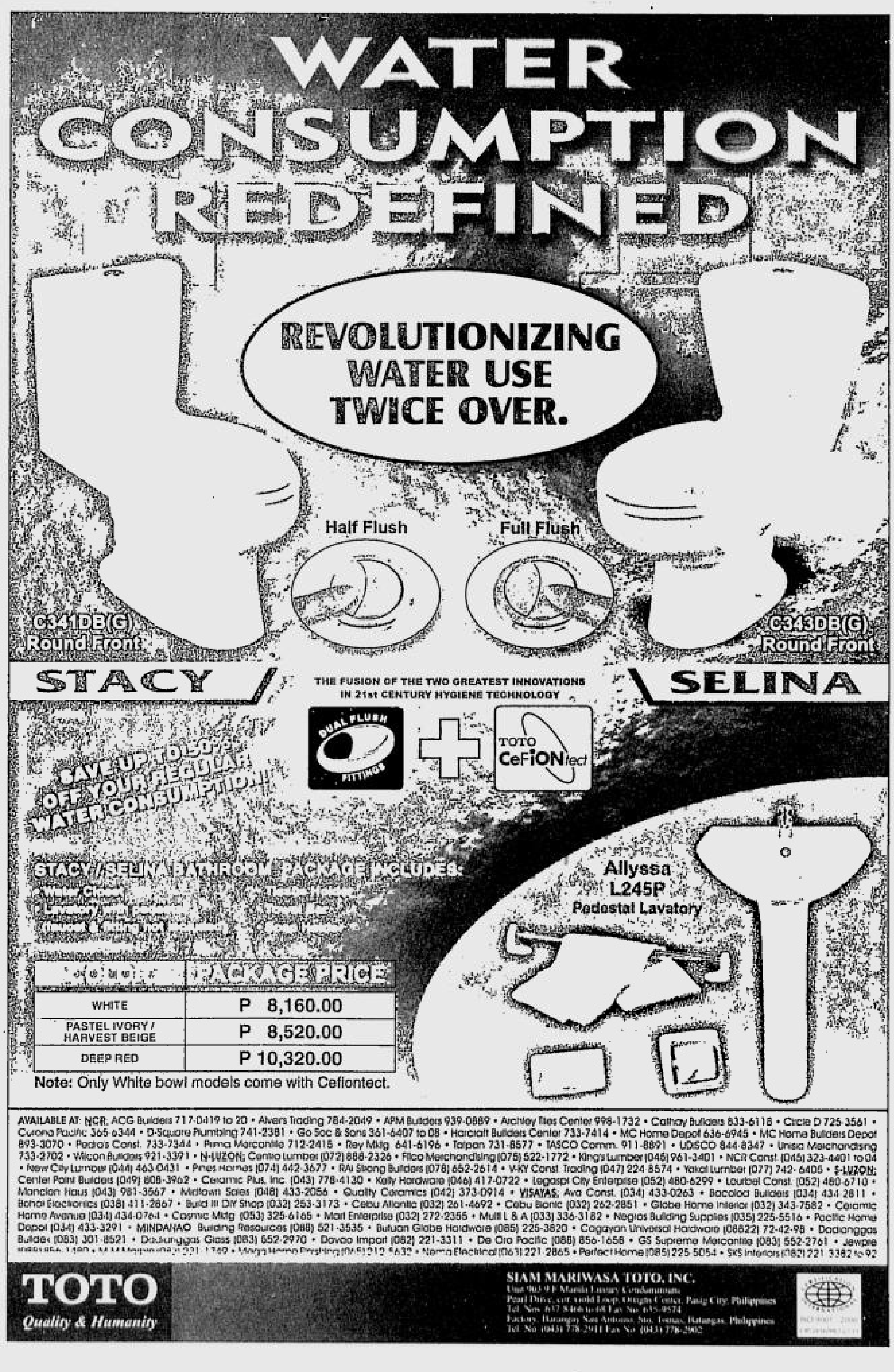
Teen spending power is redefining the marketing tacks of many of today's best-known brands.

"Many believe that tweens (children just shy of their teen years), teens, and many collegians are among the most desire-oriented consumers for multiple industries," says an American global market information firm that researches on product sales and consumer patterns. "They have bigger wallets of their own and more money is spent on them by their parent than on previous generations, and they seem to spend their allowances on a plethora of pricey items—electronics, travel, sports gear, coffee, bottled water, entertainment and style."

Just look at the promotions of telecommunications companies and glossy magazines geared for the young market. Or look at how malls are creating special events for the "youth quakers" or how soft drink companies re-launched have familiar brands with some twist. Children of Baby Boomers—today's youth or the so-called Echo Boomers—demand brands that reflect their identity.

Gingersnaps, a local garment company that catered to toddlers and children has created a new line, Just G, for girls between 12 and 18.

The styles are flirtatious, feminine and colorful yet classy and, most important, moderately priced. Some styles have influences of Donna Karan's subtle sexiness, Marc Jacobs' colors, Shanghai Tang's frog buttons, Liberty prints. The latest collection recalls resort dressing in Hyannis Port, what with the cargos, peplum halter tops, and classic white cotton blouses. Merchandising of the line resulted in an unexpected "boom, boom effect." Kids wanted to dress up like their older sisters; mothers, on seeing clothes by Just G, wanted copies of the teen daughters' styles in their size!



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Sole searching

By Martin Valdes
Contributor

IN THE 1950s, a collection of slip-ons and padded sandals left behind by generations of prehistoric Native Americans was found in a Missouri cave. What was truly surprising—aside from the fact that prehistoric people actually found something worthwhile to do in Missouri—was that several of these ancient apparel dated back 5,000 years or more, allowing anthropologists to conclude that five millennia ago man could not only walk upright; he did so in relative comfort. At least in Missouri.

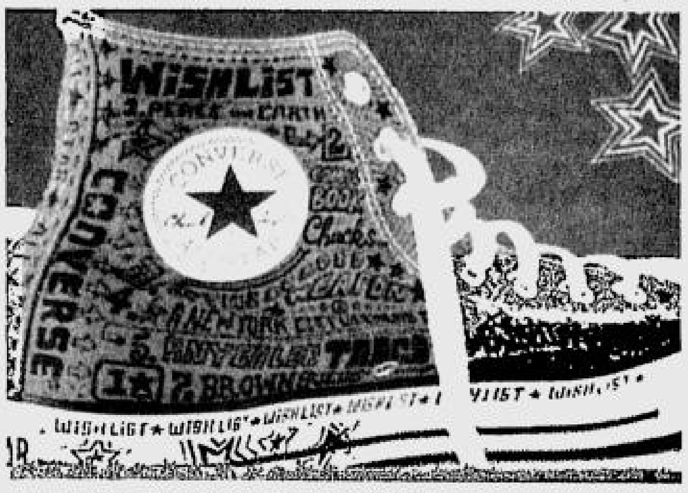
Archeologists also uncovered ancient Egyptian murals depicting everyday life by the Nile dating back to 3000 BC, and one of the activities illustrated was that of Egyptian shoemakers hard at work, probably designing the latest in desert wear: the Asics Pharaoh Dynamic.

History and personal experience will attest to the fact that humans are tender of foot. Evolution has provided us with larger brains, opposable thumbs, and a sense of humor, but has done little to advance our podiatric state. Given the peripatetic nature of man, shoes were an expected necessity. But humans, not content with simply walking upright, decided that they should be able to run as well. And jump. And kick things into goals. Thus, we wear athletic shoes.

Symbol of cool

The first rubber-soled shoes called plimsolls were developed in the United States in the late 1800s. A new manufacturing process called vulcanization, which used heat to meld rubber to cloth, was the driving technology behind this shoe revolution. Keds, the first mass-marketed canvas-top shoe, was dubbed "sneaker," due to the fact that the rubber sole made the wearer stealthy. By the 1950s, these sneakers—with a special mention for the Converse Chuck Taylors—had become the trademark of the youth, accessorized by students around the world as a symbol of rebellion, cool, and the fact that they couldn't afford much else.

But the modern-day athletic shoe has only two genuine forefathers. In 1964, Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman formed a company to market a lighter and more comfortable shoe. They named the company Nike, after the Greek goddess of victory. Half a century and several billion dollars later, the athletic footwear industry is thriving, thanks to technological advances, Michael Jordan, and catchy slogans like "Just Do It." Might as well have been "Shoe me the money!"



HIGH-cut shoes. Trademark of the youth

The athletic shoe of modern times is a beast of high engineering and urban fashion. So much thought goes into the creation of a new shoe, that it is quite accurate to compare it to the conceptualization of a new sports car, with the process focusing on performance, trend, comfort and safety. The science behind the shoe is astounding, and at times, daunting.

Adidas introduced its new line of athletic shoes showcasing a3 technology: a shoe that cushions, guides and drives the foot. Another line of Adidas footwear utilizes ClimaCool, a ventilation system meant to keep the foot cool and dry, resulting in a happier athlete. Marketing of Fila footwear boasts catch phrases like Speed-tech, FilaFlow, 3Action and Evergrind, which could refer to innovative systems meant to enhance the shoe, or boy bands that didn't survive puberty. Nike has a soccer cleat that weighs a near non-existent 196 grams and still maintains all the linear attitude of a pissed-off Mako shark. Other brands feature materials such as Kevlar, carbon inserts, and several compounds necessary to manufacture weapons-grade plutonium. All this means is that there is a shoe out there that has a better chance with women than I do.

Two-step process

The little old lady who lived in a shoe would have been mesmerized. Even a small sports store will carry upwards of 30 pairs for a customer to choose from. Walk into a shoe factory outlet and well, it's going to be like leaving Forrest Gump in Wonkaland—he'll never know what he's gonna get. These superstores may carry an overwhelming array of athletic shoes that cater to a multitude of athletic activities. It's a veritable smorgasbord of rubber and latex, ranging from the fashionably cheap to the ridiculously overpriced. But such a democracy presents the customer with much to choose from and, at times, not enough knowledge to make a wise decision. Unlike professional athletes whose equipment is specially chosen or even designed specifically for them, the average consumer will have to take his chances at his local athletics store.

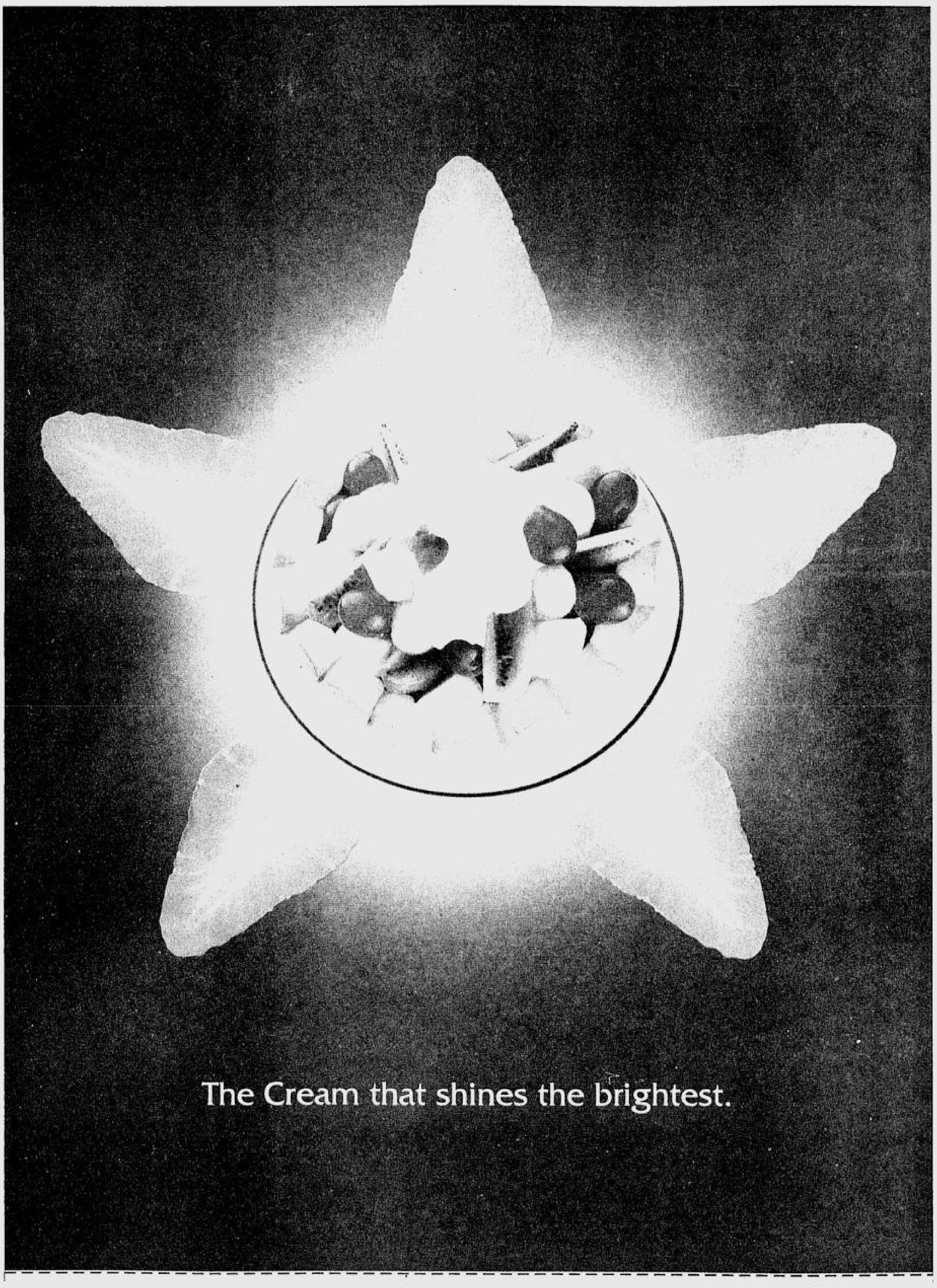
Finding your perfect sole mate is a two-step process: know your feet, and know your activity or sport. To begin with, ask yourself: How well do I know these things I've been standing on my whole life? Do I have high, medium, or low arches? Are they narrow or wide? Have I had any prior medical problems or injuries that should be taken into consideration? Is that toe supposed to be that long? Most athletic stores are staffed with personnel who should be able to assist you with some of these questions. Some brands, such as Adidas, employ considerable technology to determine what kind of a foot you have and what requirements the shoe needs to fulfill—a foot pad connected to a computer is able to measure impact depth and pronation factor when stepped on. Me, I consulted my physician, who said I had a wide foot with medium arches, and that I should quit smoking.

Just as human feet vary, so do sports and fitness levels. For example, if you like to play the random pick-up game of basketball on Tuesday nights and have a short jog through Rizal Park on the weekends, an all-purpose cross-training pair would fit the bill. But if you participate in a single sport regularly, you should wear shoes specific to that activity, as they may help you avoid injuries like "shin splits" and ankle sprains.

In general, people who run or do aerobics need shoes with a lot of impact-absorbing cushioning. Walkers should seek out shoes that have extra shock absorption at the heels as well as soles that provide a good roll off the toes. Court dwellers need shoes that keep the ankle stable. If you're in it for fashion alone, just make sure they match your socks. Of course, certain activities such as golf, football, baseball or any water-sport require very specialized needs; so don't attempt a reverse lay-up in Tiger Woods' shoes.

The shoe that fits one person pinches another. Carl Jung said this. And while he probably meant it as an analogy for individuality of lifestyle, it fits this feature just as well, and lends intellectual credence to myself. Finding an athletic shoe is a lot like getting into a relationship, I think. You start by getting to know yourself, your nuances, your needs, your weaknesses. And then you search for something that compliments your lifestyle, something that takes away some of the shock of the daily rat race, that keeps you standing on two feet, that inspires you to compete and become a better person. So you invest time and money, and you make sure you've made the right choice, and it's all good. Until it splits or someone steals it from you.

TODAY'S styles provide air flow and arc support.



The Cream that shines the brightest.

Melon Cream Boat

1	*whole honeydew melon*
2	*med. ripe mangoes, sliced*
3	*pcs. kiwis, peeled and cut into wedges*
1-1/4	*cup (approx. 200g) seedless grapes*
2	*tbsp. confectioners' sugar*
1	*170g. can* ***NESTLÉ Cream***
	chilled juice of 1 orange
	thin strips of orange zest, for garnish

Cut off about 2 inches of the stem end of the melon; discard the seeds and scoop out the flesh into small balls and place in a bowl. Add the mangoes, kiwis and grapes to the melon balls. Refrigerate.

Sift sugar on top and then sprinkle with orange juice. Spoon the mixture into the melon boat. Pour chilled **NESTLÉ Cream** on top. Garnish with orange zest. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

Note: Cantaloupe may be used in place of honeydew melon.

Nestlé
cream

ÉLAN
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Editor Marge Enriquez
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2003 D1
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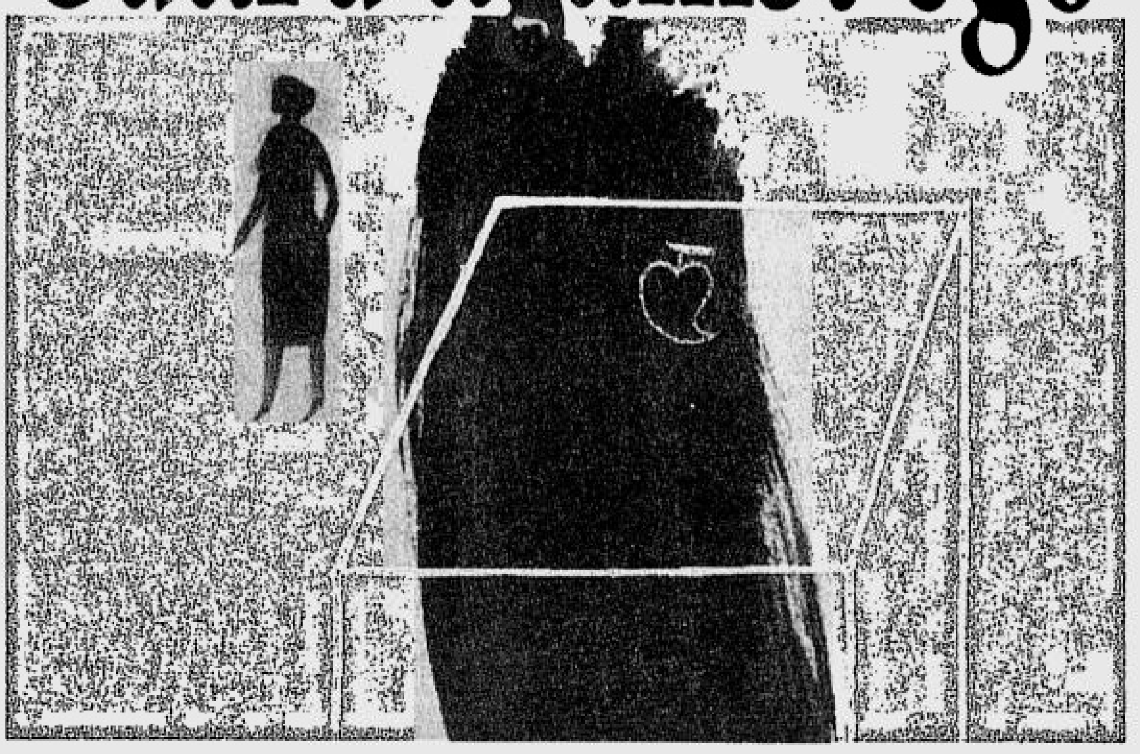
By Marge C. Enriquez

Guard against ego



This 'vice' is manifested in tendencies to resist, complain, blame, criticize, envy, doubt, deny, judge, worry, lie, dislike, disapprove, and compete

ONCE upon a time, a cub lion wandered away from the pack and got lost. He saw a flock of sheep. Taken by the innocence of the cub lion, the mother sheep adopted and raised him. The cub lion was so at home with the flock that he came to think he was a sheep.

One day two big, hungry lions chanced upon the flock and were ready to pounce on the sheep. The little lion trembled with fear.

The big lion laughed. "Why are you shaking?"

"You are going to eat me!" exclaimed the cub.

The big lion took the cub to the pond so he could look at himself. On seeing his reflection, and realizing what he really was, the little one let out a magnificent roar.

Recognize the story?

Ego problems

"It was a moment of reflection, the awakening from a wrong self-image. Ego stops us from being aware of our real selves," says Mike George, London-based life coach, management consultant and author. He conducts workshops on stress-free living and gives lectures on creative visualization, self-management and positive thinking.

"In my personal journey, I have been very interested in exploring the subject of ego. It was the deepest aspect of myself that was interfering with my growth. It's the greatest obstacle to unity, the biggest wall between you and me and success. Developing stress management workshops, I came to realize that all forms of stress come from ego. I'm not saying that I'm an authority and free of ego. I've come to believe that everyone suffers from some aspects of it, however subtle this thing called ego," says George.

He defines ego as attachment to the wrong image of the self or false belief about the self. "With its obscure, self-seeking agenda and its wishes, hopes, fears and attachments, ego often casts a distorting veil around reality," he says "Where there is ego, there is attachment. Where there is attachment, there is resistance, followed by fear. Therefore, where there is fear, there is ego. Any moment I experience fear, it means I have ego. That fear has been stimulated inside out."

George breaks down the process:

1) **Attention.** A person, an event, an object or a position grabs my interest.

2) **Attraction.** I get pulled to it.

3) **Attachment.** I start identifying with it and relish it in my mind.

4) **Addiction.** I become obsessive about it, so that my happiness becomes dependent on it. This illusion makes me vulnerable by creating the fear that somebody or something will take my gratification.

5) **Atonement.** I pay the price. The object of desire keeps coming back and leaves such a deep imprint in the mind that it is painful to let go.

"A great deal of personal misery is caused by the tension between the public 'I' and the profound sense of an inner (frequently unfulfilled) self," George says. "If I identify too much with my public roles, I become vulnerable. For example, if I lose a job or a partner, I may feel that my identity has been shattered. This is an illusion caused by attachment."

Ego is manifested in tendencies to resist, complain, blame, criticize, separate, fragment, possess, envy, project, doubt, defend, correct, avoid, deny, desire, judge, worry, lie, dislike, disapprove, and compete.

To guard against ego attacks, here is the "ABCDE of Transformation" as formulated by George.

AWARENESS. Be conscious of the self and responsive to the roles of God and destiny. The first step is to be in touch with my core qualities. I am a touchstone of truth and values. When I awaken to the reality of these qualities, I channel them outward and transform my relationships. Ego that has been cultivated over time cuts deep into the consciousness. If I have created this habit of getting angry, which surfaces as complaining, blaming and criticizing, no amount of knowledge can heal that. Only God's power can heal, but only if I choose to be aware of Him. Destiny is the energy that flows like a river around me. If I resist and don't accept the flow, that's ego. I might be scared that the river would wash away what I've been holding on to. Once I'm aware, I know what it means to "go with the flow." Risks and growth go together. Sometimes life moves slowly and I'm just standing back, observing and assessing. At other times, I need to replenish, renew, recreate and reconnect to the Source of the river. Conflict is caused by resisting another's ideas or position. The solution is to accept even if I don't agree. I should opt for dialogue over debate.

BELIEVE. I should believe that I can change. I should break down the barriers of falsehoods that I have created about and around myself.

CREATIVITY. To let go of my bad habits, I recreate my self-image. Every interaction is an opportunity to recreate myself. Service is an opportunity to be creative.

DISCIPLINE. This doesn't mean being heavy or rigid about things. It means learning or looking only at ways that expand my capacity.

EMPOWERMENT. I should be a master, not a slave. When I wake up in the morning, do I groan, "Oh, it's another workday. I have to do this or meet these people!" Or do I exclaim, "People, opportunities, situations—let me out there!" Life is either a have-to or a love-to.

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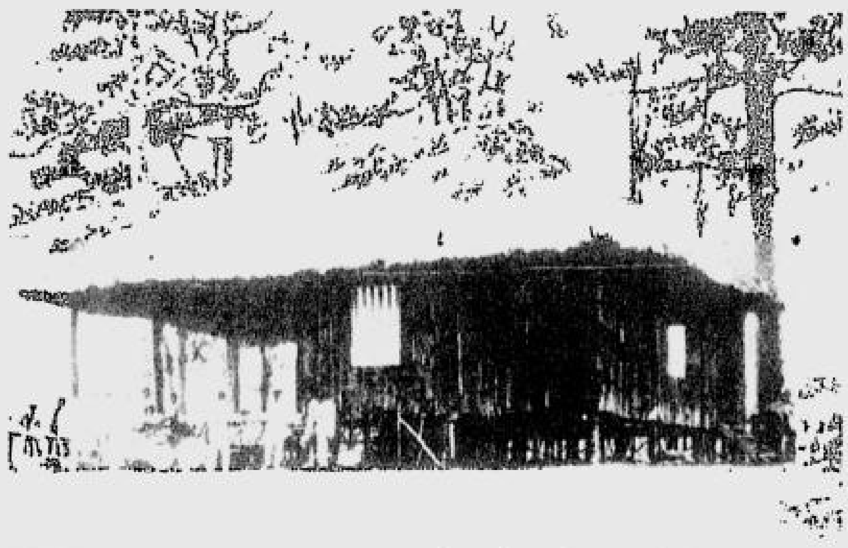
A 'strong sense of place'

NO longer a bastion of American colonialism, the Baguio Country Club's architecture reflects native and global influences.



THE FIRST country club for officers was bungalow that used indigenous materials.

TO HISTORIANS, the Baguio Country Club is a symbol of American colonialism and elitism. Today, it is the showcase of a culture that got the best of the East and the West. The renovations, spearheaded by Francisco Mañosa's firm, are in harmony with tradition and environment.

Virginia Licuanan's book on the BCC's history, "Filipinos and Americans: A Love-Hate Relationship," recounts the Caucasians' extreme sensitivity to tropical weather. The exhaustion the Americans experienced drove them to that cool place up North that they had read about in the Spanish chronicles. Upon seeing Baguio, they envisioned a health resort.

The original Baguio Country Club was a modest cogon-roofed, window-less—except for *sawali* screens—and door-less cottage built in 1904 for P400. All the facilities it had were two tennis courts, croquet grounds and a three-hole golf course. Igorots served as caddies, Ilocanos were hired as grooms for the stables, and the Filipino mestizos were invited to join in the sports.

Since 1910, The Verandah has been the place to be seen. In the 1930s, the BCC expanded its golf courses and mounted dogs shows and flower shows patronized by American women. Eventually, the club was opened to chosen Filipinos. After the war, it began an earnest campaign to invite Filipinos. Roman Ozaeta became the first Filipino president.

The BCC was a power place. President Manuel Quezon enjoyed its greens. Ramon Magsaysay, then Defense Secretary, owned shares. Ferdinand Marcos as a solon played golf here. By this time the BCC had risen to a multistory complex with the top floor consisting of suites, mezzanines and winding staircases.

> The Baguio Country Club has come a long way from an American social officers' club to an icon of local pride

A few years ago the complex was razed to the ground. The new structure that replaced it was made of concrete, too cold and imposing against a mountain setting. With plans to convert it to a semi-lodge, board directors Sylvia Illusorio and Margarita Cojuangco tapped Mañosa's firm to give the club a facelift.

Mañosa observed that the Filipino's colonial mentality favored Swiss chalets and American colonial bungalows in such an environment. Known for his partiality to Filipino style, the architect batted for a new BCC whose style reflected the character of the region.

His firm had done resorts, such as the Pearl Farm in Davao, which had been featured in Architectural Digest; and the Amanpulo in Palawan. The design of both these properties had been inspired by their environment. For the BCC, the firm drew influences from the Cordillera tribes. It wanted to establish a "strong sense of place" based on the light, history, weather and indigenous materials.

And so the balconies were dressed with simulated pine logs. Mañosa explained that since the company was environmentally conscious, instead of cutting down precious pine trees, it sourced "pine logs" made from lightweight resin.

Cecilia Hofileña headed the refurbishing team for the rooms. Colors and artifacts were drawn from such ethnic groups as the Ifugaos, Mangyans, Kalingas, et al. The soft beige color scheme was accented with the strong reds and blues favored by these tribes. Focal points were the headboards, with large frames displaying Cordillera jars, baskets, wooden bowls and necklaces.

The furniture was re-upholstered from cotton chintz to fabrics with rougher texture. The paint was stripped off to show the natural patina of the woods. Thick curtains that provided privacy but blocked the view have been replaced with wooden louvers to allow natural lighting and ventilation.

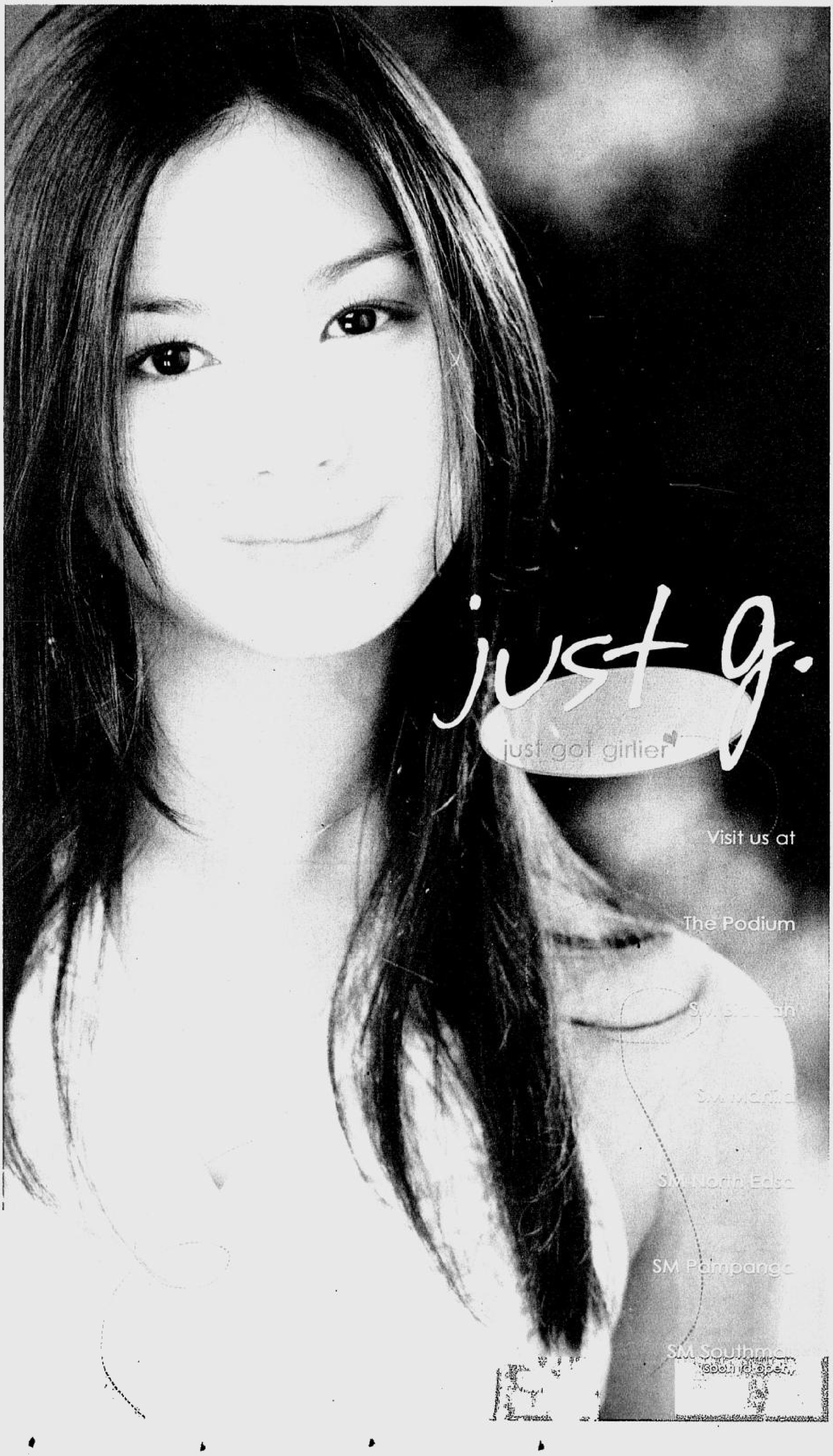
"In all our projects, we aim to develop appreciation for local materials," said Hofileña.

Every room has ceiling fans. She explained that Baguio should be enjoyed for its mountain air. During summer, instead of using air-conditioners, the fan increases the exchange of quality air to keep the room cool. The indoor pool area was likewise redesigned to "bring the outdoors inside."

Indeed the BCC has come a long way from an American social officers' club to an icon of local pride.

Marge C. Enriquez

THE BCC'S structural membrane uses simulated logs and Cordillera stones.



How does Santa do it?

In a leaked report from an international committee of researchers looking into the whereabouts and well-being of Santa Claus, the conclusions for the world's children are not good this Christmas Eve. Many of the scientists doing the research were reluctant to participate in the project, having feared damaging Santa's reputation.

These are some of the most startling revelations:

1) No known species of reindeer can fly. However, there are some 300,000 species of living organisms yet to be classified, and while most of these are insects and germs, this does not completely rule out the possibility of flying reindeer, which only Santa has seen.

2) A random search through some of the hundreds of thousands of letters sent through the Post Office revealed many addressed to Mrs. S. Claus. Scientists were unsure, however, if Santa was actually female or if many children are just fed up sitting on the knees of grumpy old men who annually imitate Santa across the country in department stores across the globe.

3) There are more than two billion children (persons under 18) in the world. However, since Santa doesn't appear to visit the Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist children, that reduces the workload to 15 percent of the total, or 378 million according to the Population Reference Bureau. At an average (census) rate of 3.5 children per household, and presuming there is at least one good child in each home, the report estimates Santa has to make a staggering 91.8 million home visits.

4) Santa has 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to 822.6 visits per second which means that for each Christian household with good children, Santa has 1/1000th of a second to park, hop out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left, crawl back up the chimney, get back into his sleigh and move on to the next house. Assuming that each of these 91.8 million stops are evenly distributed around the earth (which, of course, we know to be false but for purposes of calculations we will accept) Santa will have to travel about .78 miles between each household, a total trip of 75.5 million miles, not counting stops to do what most of us do at least once every 31 hours, plus feeding etc. This means that Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second, 3,000 times faster than the speed of sound. For purposes of comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle on earth, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second—while a conventional reindeer can reach top speed of around 15 miles per hour.

5) The payload on the sleigh adds another interesting element. Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium sized Lego set (two pounds) the sleigh is carrying 321,300 tons, not counting Santa, who has invariably been described as overweight. On land, conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. Even granting that flying reindeer could pull 10 times the normal amount, the job cannot be done with eight, or even nine, in fact 214,263 reindeers are required. This increases the payload—not even counting the weight of the sleigh—to approximately 353,430 tons. Again, for comparison, this is roughly four times the weight of the Queen Elizabeth.

6) 353,430 tons travelling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance—this will heat the reindeer up in the same fashion as the spacecraft reentering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb 14.3 Quintillion joules of energy. Per second. Each. In short, they will burst into flame almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them, and creating deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire reindeer team will be vaporized within 4.26 thousands of a second. Santa, meanwhile, will be subjected to centrifugal forces 17,200.06 times greater than the earth's gravity. A 250-pound Santa (which seems ludicrously slim) would be pinned to the back of his sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds for force.

The conclusion of this devastating report is that if Santa ever did deliver presents on Christmas Day, he's dead now. However, science is increasingly getting it wrong these days, so do watch your chimney this Christmas Eve. Just don't hold your breath.

—"Only 91.8 million to go!"

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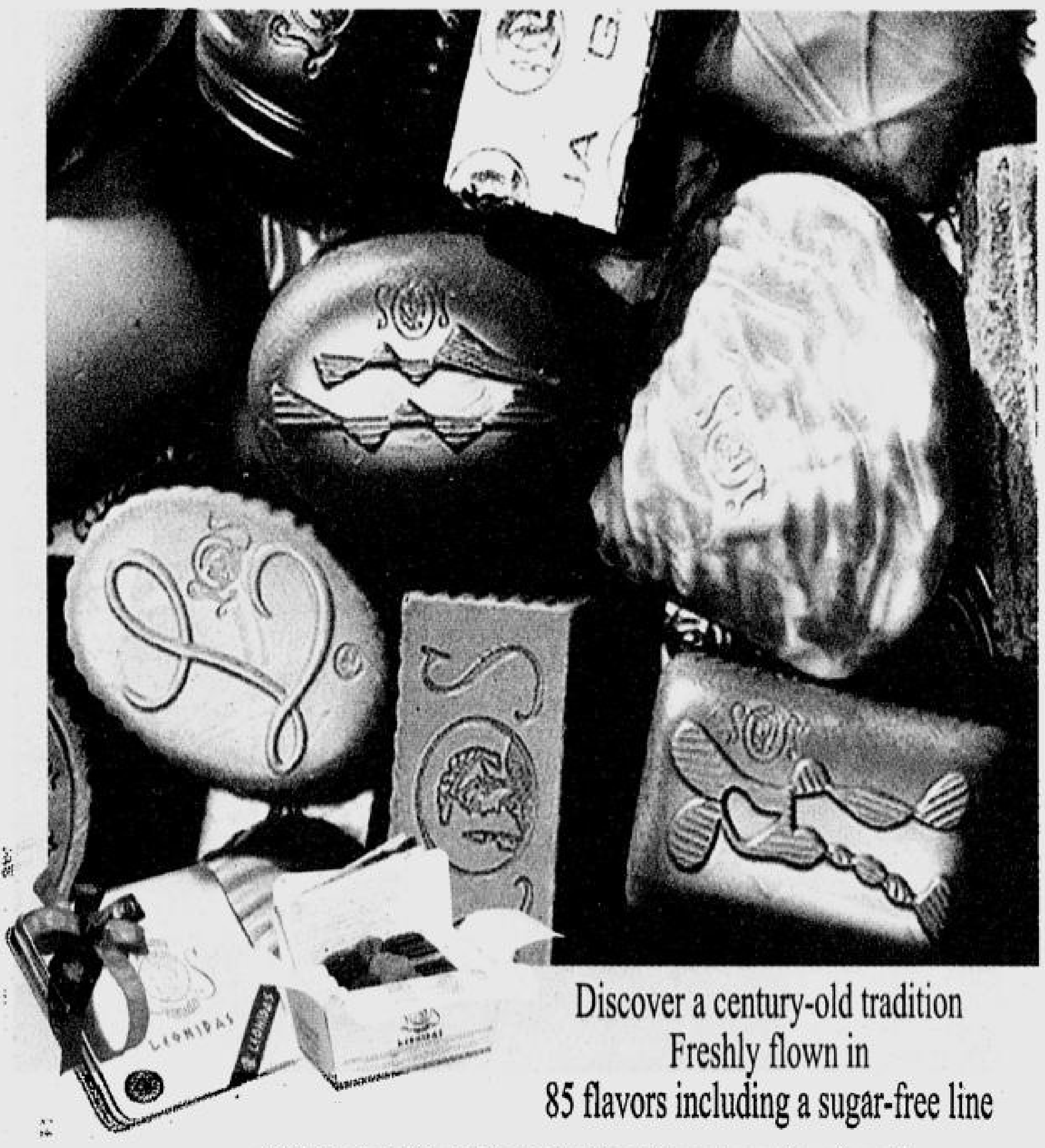

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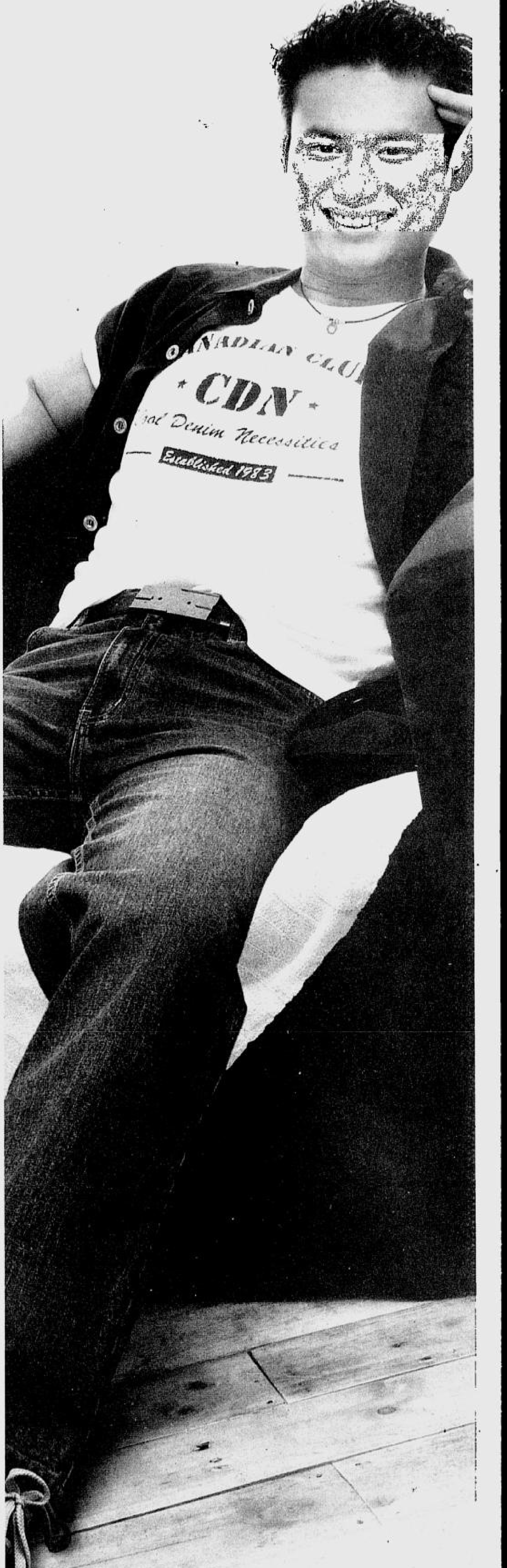

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Anything but Asian generic

By Amando Doronila, *Contributor* • Photos by Johnny Villena

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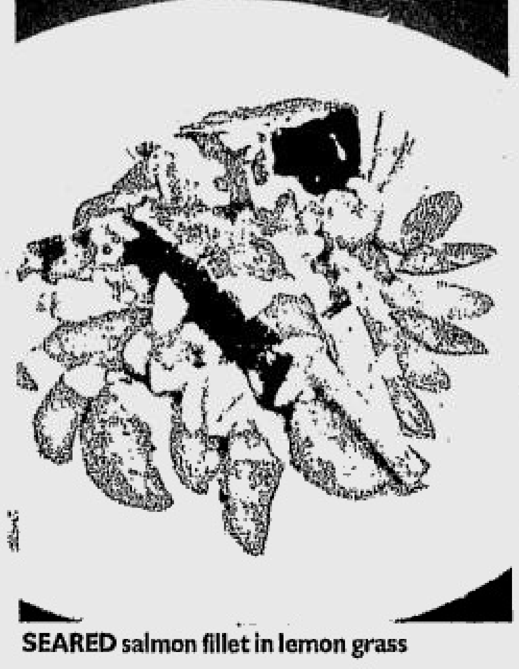

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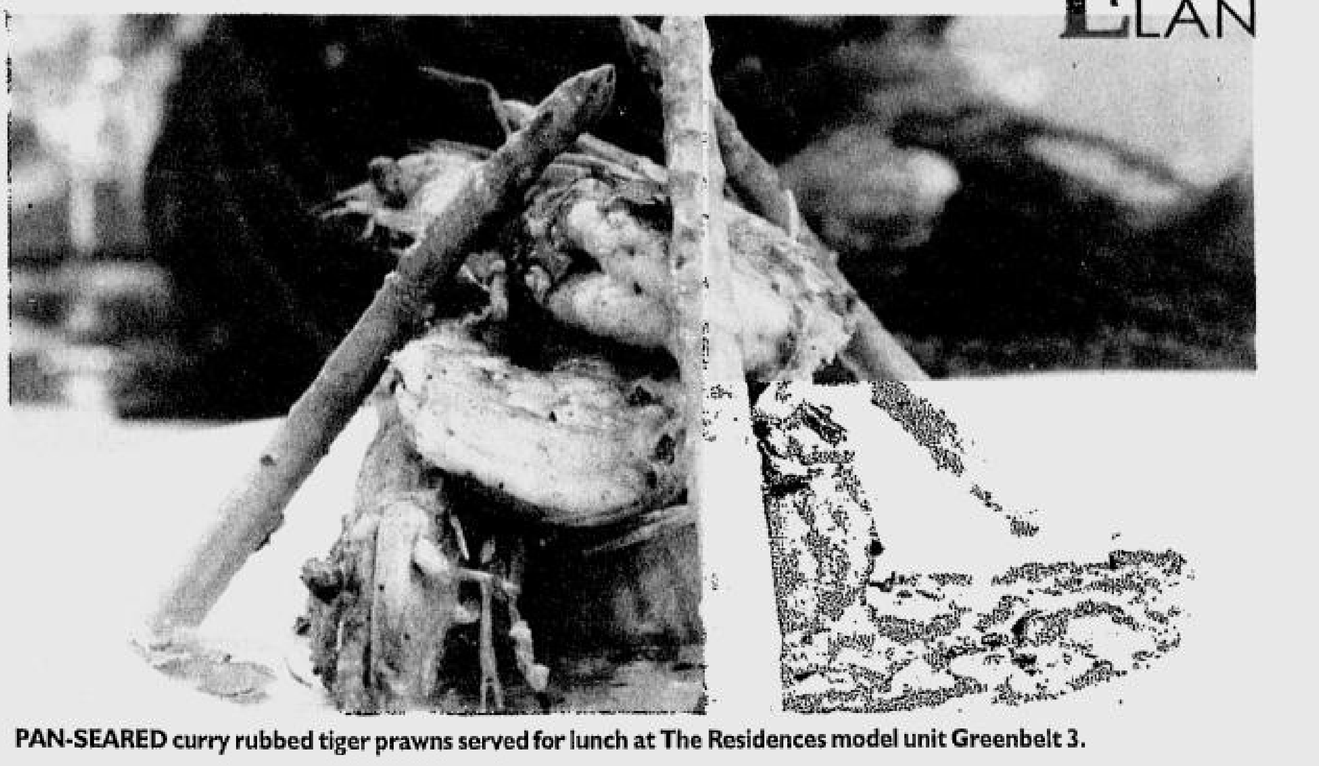

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Dinner by the bay

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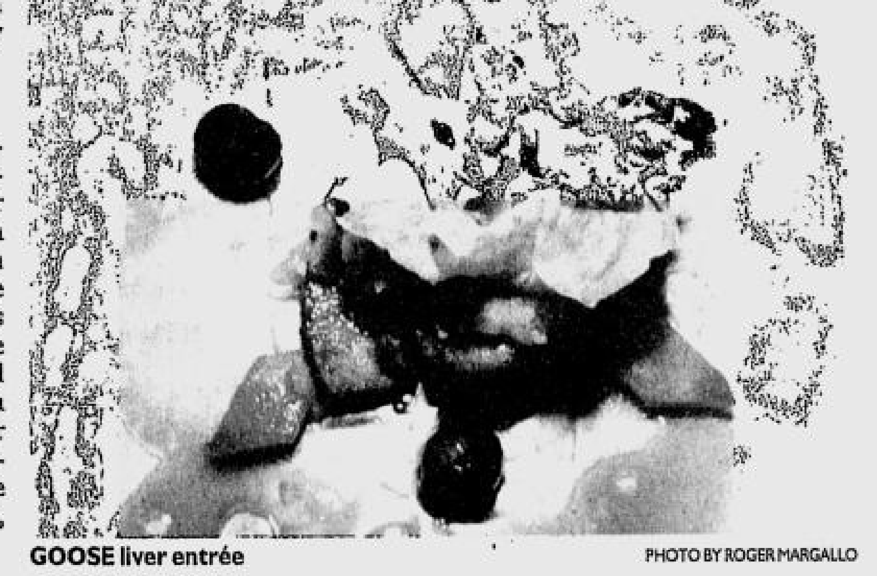

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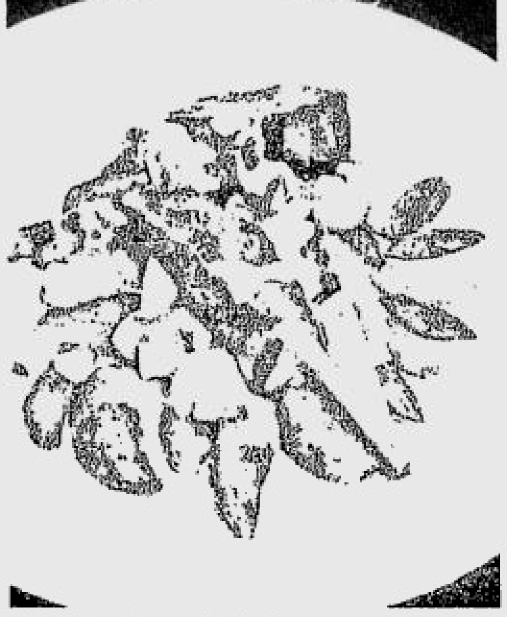

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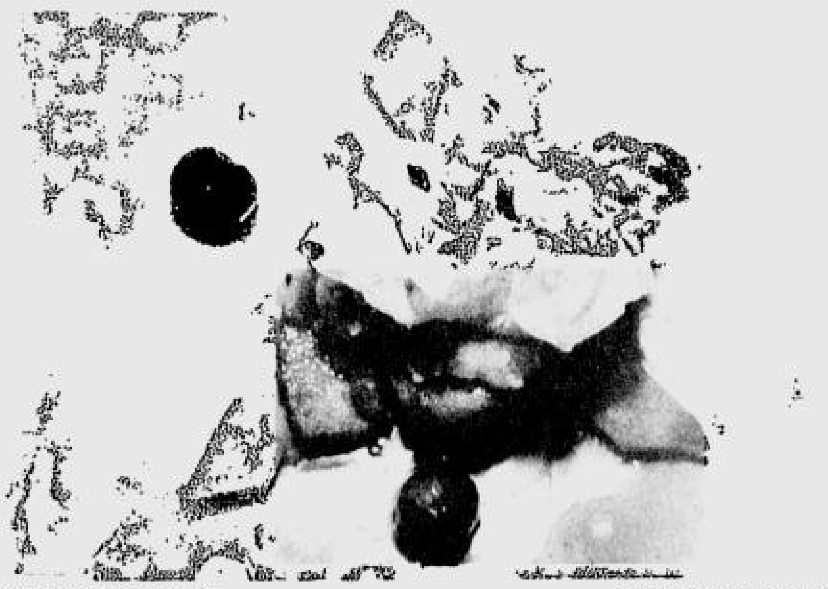

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PHOTO BY ROGER MARGALLO

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AT MACULANGAN's exhibit aims to broaden the horizon of the art public.

The scent of money and Green Papaya

By Leovino Ma. Garcia
Contributor

WHAT is not a gallery, but offers space to creative young artists who are not yet promoted commercially? What is not an interior design store, but where you can pick up a lamp that is a veritable *objet d'art*?

Answer: "Green Papaya Art Projects" on 124-A Maginhawa corner Mahabagin St. in Teachers Village East, Quezon City.

Managed by Manny Chaves (Ateneo economics graduate / graphics wizard / photographer / Gilda Cordero Fernando's favorite book designer / art impresario) and Norberto "Peewee" Roldan (advertising-marketing expert, formerly of ABS-CBN), this garage hole has been transformed into a magic cavern where enthusiasts may finally learn to appreciate art pieces without first considering their price tags.

Not that Manny and Peewee do not care about the scent of money (yes, their place alludes to the Vietnamese film). They are only too aware that art is essential like air, water, food, and shelter. Art shouldn't ever be a luxury hurriedly added on after one has made a fortune—to gain respectability, to impress more people, to achieve culturati status. And if art is truly essential, then one has to be willing to support it; yes, that is to pay a fair price for it.

And what would be fair? The price that you are willing to pay for what you desire. Only trouble is, art can sometimes be an irrational desire and there are just too many people prepared to manipulate that desire.

Art and economics

Green Papaya Art Projects navigates the route between two eighteenth-century pronouncements: William Blake's "Where any view of money exists, art cannot be carried on," and Samuel Johnson's "No [person] but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money."

If art is essential, then why isn't the creative young artist supported while he strives and starves (although today, that degree of starvation is relative)? Why do people only buy the paintings of an artist when he has long carved a name and often, sadly, when he is already comfortably uninspired)? Cases in point, if I may risk my neck, are H.R. Ocampo, Federico Alcuaz, and Anita Magsaysay-Ho.

It is a fallacy to think art and money do not go together. We are thus reminded by the noted art critic Robert Hughes, who recently came out with a book on Goya. It is a grievous mistake to consider art as totally spiritual and unrelated to economics. Art is economics. Culture is economics. This is why the governments of countries like Singapore and France pour so much money into culture and art. In the final analysis, art and culture may transcend economics, but not without going through it first.

Non-quantifiable

There is a grand gap between being spiritual and being spiritualistic, just as there is an immense difference between being materialistic and being rooted in matter. To be rooted in matter is the only way to being spiritual. As the phenomenological philosophers have stressed for more than half a century, we are all incarnate spirits. And as incarnate spirits, not disembodied souls, to defend the spiritual is to take real care of the material. Capital is not only material and economic but cultural and social. There exists "non-quantifiable pleasures".

From this perspective, one can understand Manny and Peewee's authentic exhilaration even after curating truly creative exhibits, where few pieces or none were sold. Like the Lani Maestro show on the *bangko* (stool), which inspired me to make my "Meditation on the Bangko" (Philippine Daily Inquirer ÉLAN issue of 28 June 2003). Like At Maculangan's show "Scelta Obligatoria" for which Manny took pains to produce an unusual invitation, not for profit but to broaden the horizon of the art public.

Museum and the market

Manny and Peewee are two exceptional persons who have emerged more insightful and more idealistic after stints in advertising and marketing. They have discerned the lesson of "being generous"—giving "without counting the cost" and taken to heart the biblical counsel, "Not by bread alone does man live."

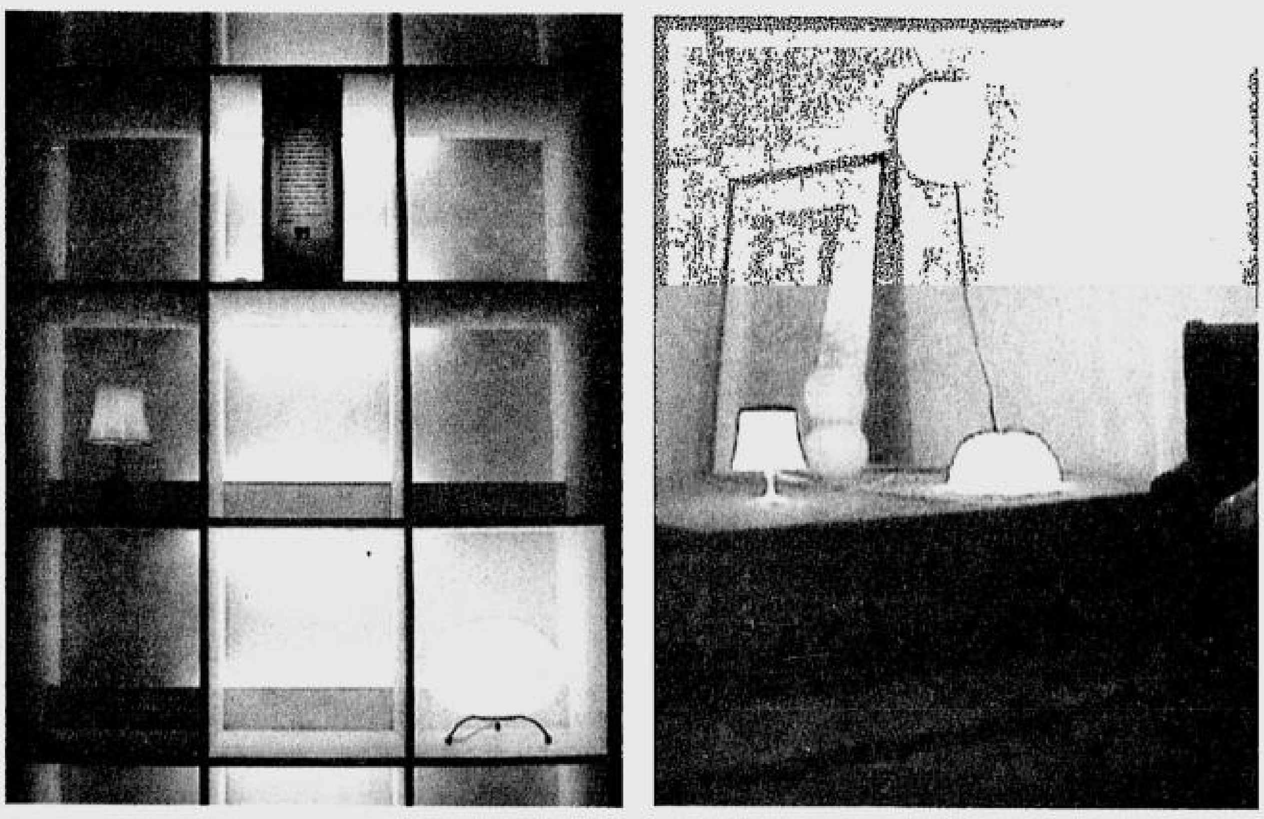
They have been gifted with the illumination to see the important distinction between being an investor and a benefactor in art. To involve oneself in art matters solely for investment may be missing the whole point. There is real pleasure in doing something simply for art's sake—and maybe, incidentally, making money in the process.

Manny and Peewee have also perceived the thin divide between the museum/gallery and the market. Have most of the galleries simply become markets? Have people missed the whole point that art is deeply rooted in life, that it is life raised to a higher level?

One breathes art. One is not afraid to touch it. Finally, one buys art, not to alienate oneself from the rest, not to look down upon everyone. One supports art to promote the solidarity that binds all human beings. One devotes oneself to art because one has experienced the exquisite joy aptly expressed by Omar Khayyam in The Rubaiyat: "A Book of Verses underneath the Bough/ A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread and Thou/ Beside me singing in the Wilderness/ Oh, Wilderness were paradise now." Omar Khayyam might as well have described a typical opening night at Green Papaya.

Green Papaya Art Projects is located at 124-A Maginhawa corner Mahabagin St., Teachers Village East, Quezon City; Tel. No. 927 3187; Fax 926 2096; email greenpapaya@pacific.net.ph;Open: 3 to 9 p.m., Monday to Saturday

From garage hole to magic cavern where enthusiasts may appreciate art pieces without considering price tags



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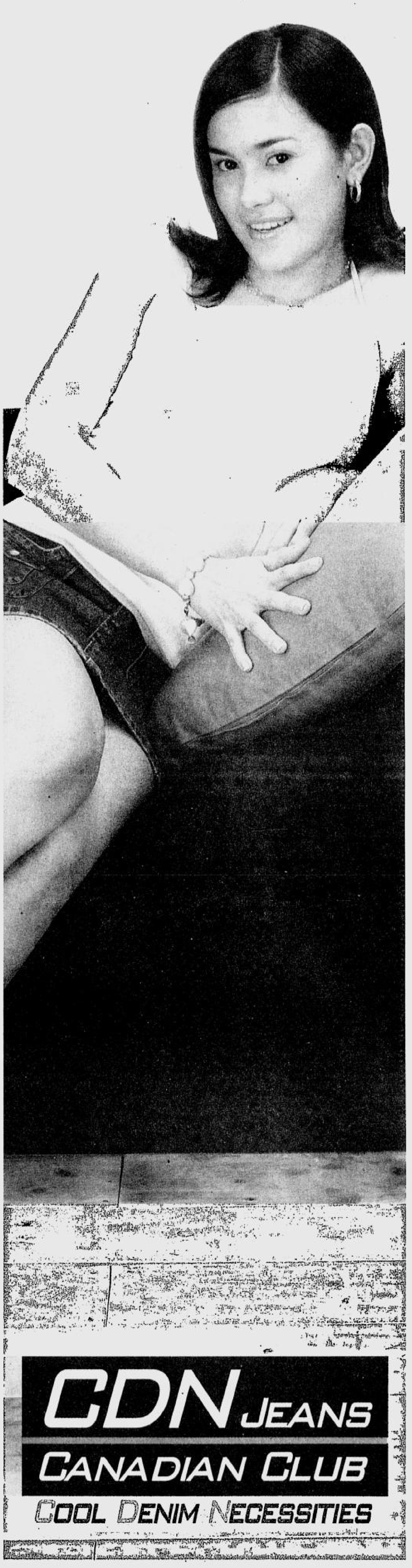
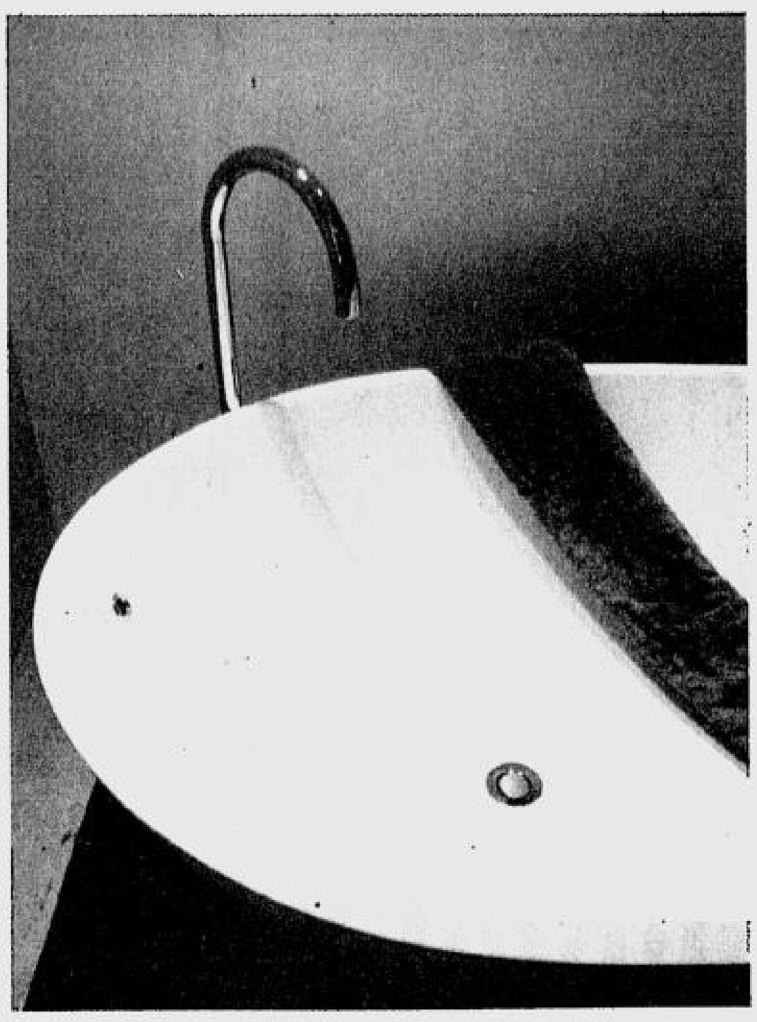
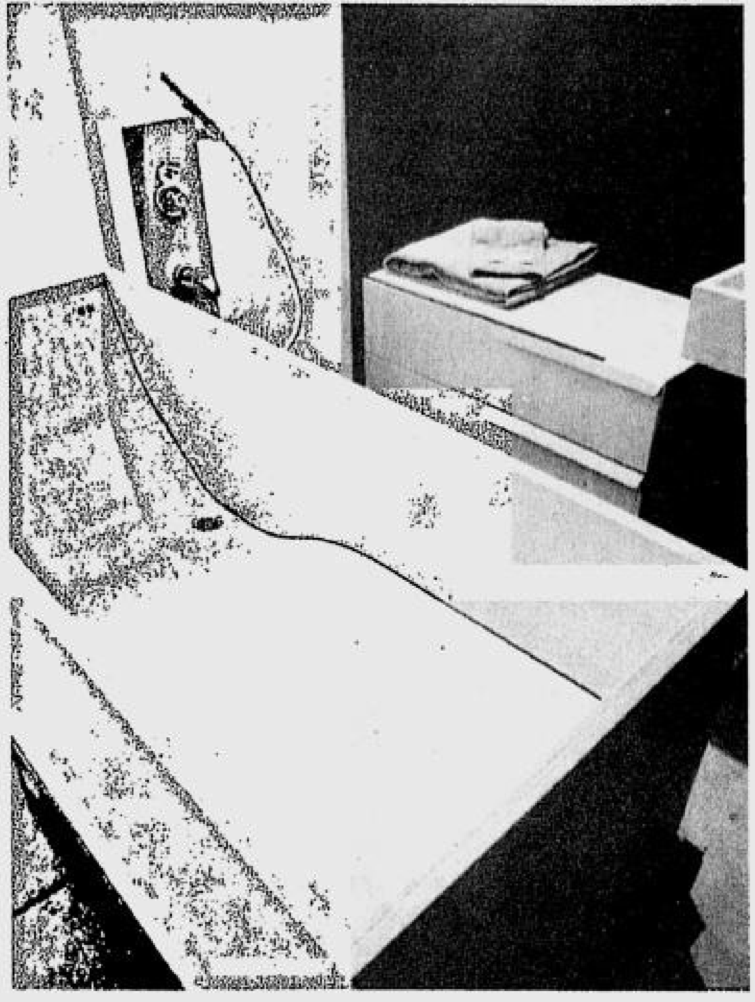


OFF THE WALL

By Bea P. Valdes, *Contributor*
Photos by Chito Vecina • Pictorial direction by Albert Avellana



IN YOUR FACE. Lavabo Italian style



JUST add water. This bathtub made of treated wood from Agape sports a six-figure price tag.

"PRADA Lime," he confesses.

"We thought the color of the showroom exterior should be simple, but not just white and black," explains Architect Gil Coscoluella. "We wanted something a little out of the ordinary."

Tom Batac nods in agreement: "Out of the ordinary."

That's exactly what Liberty Stiles, emporium of ceramic tiles and natural stone, has turned out to be.

Though their color cue is pre-Rem Koolhaas, one can almost say that they share another Prada showroom concept—one that elevates the space beyond just that of a "store," to a venue for "the tectonic plates of merchandising and architecture to collide." Literally.

Okay, maybe there's not as much collision as artful alignment going on in this showroom. Coscoluella points out that the design is a structured mix of industrial and luxurious. There is back-lit alabaster at the reception, but it is held together by exposed metal joists. The concrete floor is sliced by a strip of slate that rolls out towards the back of the showroom, into the patio, culminating in a frozen wave. Assorted tile samples are suspended neatly on the walls, alternating corners with paintings. The larger tiles have been laid out on angles and sliding leaves, as if leafing through a gallery where material is muse.

Gleaming slabs of granite and marble double up as work tables. Wide enough to accommodate plans, working drawings and coffee for multiple designers, they also conceal a library of stone samples. There is a lounge that opens up to a patio, where meetings or cocktails for new-product launches can be held.

"Check out the powder room," Dinggay Espiritu and Lani Hernandez, sales managers, tell me excitedly. The space is a pocket of colorful, semi-transparent glass mosaics veined with enamels, yet another example of numerous flooring options. A vertical strip of mirror wraps around the room, framing an amusing PVC wash basin in blunted acid yellow. Its floppy, trippy design wins points for daring.

Architecture is not merely building, Le Corbusier said, but an expression of the materials and methods of our times. And there is great enthusiasm at Liberty Stiles for such modern materials. This is a show space of graceful geometry and elegant solutions free from cultural clues. But it is also a working studio that welcomes both designers and clients searching for that new kitchen counter or quality tiles.

Tom Batac is the man behind Liberty Stiles and its image-neering urbanism.

But how did it all begin?

"With an empty pocket," Tom declares. He narrates how he arrived in the States in 1978, a newly minted architect from the University of Santo Tomas. He could not find a design job, so instead he joined a small stone supplying company. He was the fourth person on board. But the time was ripe for exploration of high rises, and New York was the place to be. At its peak, that small company swelled to a 120-man operation.

"Then of course, you know, (in the) late '80s, the economy went sour," Tom sighs, recalling the swing of the commercial pendulum.

So, in 1993, he decided to go off on his own, creating a company called Liberty Marble and Granite. But Tom seems to possess that special brand of magic that makes everything from nothing. In just two weeks, through his network of friends, suppliers and clients, he landed solid projects. In NYC, he provided stone for the Winter Garden, the Warner Bros. Store, JP Morgan, Dolce & Gabbana Boutique on Madison Avenue, Niketown, Ritz Carlton, and the Trump Plaza to name a few.

Asked if he doesn't seek the creativity of practicing architecture, he replies "My business is one of the focal points in an architect's building." It is, indeed, a symbiotic relationship. Architects rely on the quality of his material to fully realize their design intent.

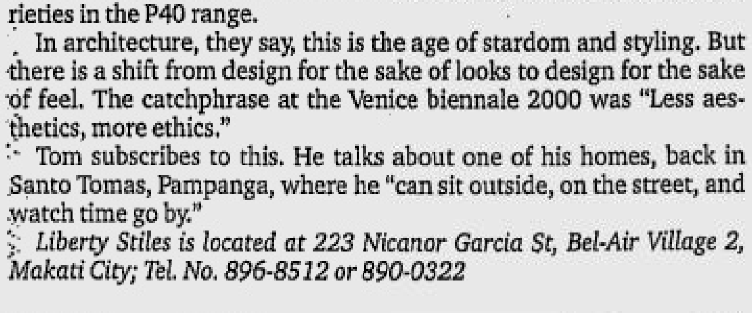
Upon his return to Manila, Tom founded Liberty Marble and Granite, which has since supplied stone for RCBC Plaza, the Philam Life Tower, as well as Phinma Plaza in Rockwell. The Pallisades in Makati, a Coscoluella building, is clad in his French limestone.

Liberty Stiles has him and his exuberant team voyaging through the domestic landscape. It is also the exclusive distributor for Agape, which boasts of a wooden bathtub, among other contemporary bathroom accessories and fixtures. Agape is pricey; even one who can afford it would blink. But the product line for tiles is extensive, with varieties in the P40 range.

In architecture, they say, this is the age of stardom and styling. But there is a shift from design for the sake of looks to design for the sake of feel. The catchphrase at the Venice biennale 2000 was "Less aesthetics, more ethics."

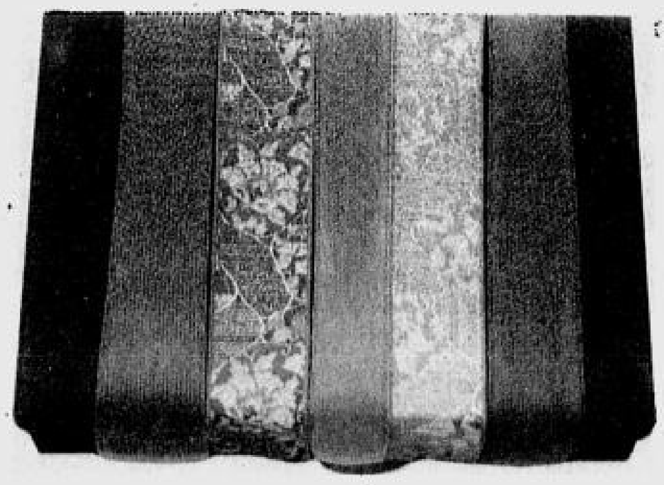
Tom subscribes to this. He talks about one of his homes, back in Santo Tomas, Pampanga, where he "can sit outside, on the street, and watch time go by."

Liberty Stiles is located at 223 Nicanor Garcia St, Bel-Air Village 2, Makati City; Tel. No. 896-8512 or 890-0322



TREASURES. Golden glass tiles that actress Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo bought as accent for her bathroom.

SITTING in style a la Italiana amid glass mosaic walls.



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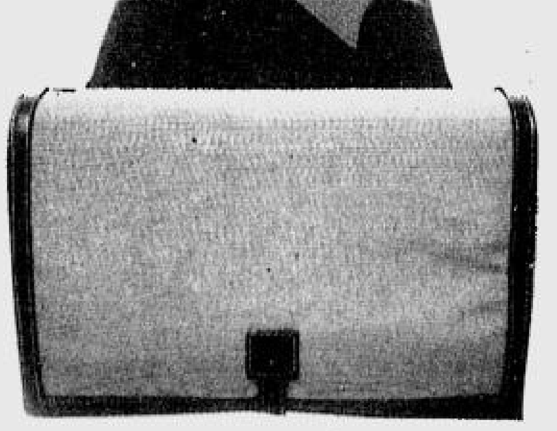

Ahh, to be in Amsterdam!

By Adrian Lizares
Contributor

ARRIVING in Amsterdam on a flight from Asia could be daunting. Friendly, though thorough, immigration officers scrutinize everyone's passport right at the end of the tube! You haven't even stepped on Dutch soil and there they will be with their magnifying glasses. It helps that they are courteous, though, and my friend Roxanne says it also helps that the guys are all very good-looking, making the process a little less annoying. "Welcome to Holland," they say, and I beam all the way to customs.

The diverse city of Amsterdam, unlike other big cities, is surprisingly very quiet, and at times quite still! I head straight to my hosts at the Herengracht (one of the four main canals), the door opens to hugs and kisses. Breakfast is promptly set, and my journey into Amsterdam begins.

Outside the window are endless rows of 15th-century bourgeois homes painted in earth colors. The architecture gives Amsterdam a distinct characteristic. It is as I imagined it to be. I notice that façades painted in many shades of black abound, pretty much appropriate for the winter. Back at the host's well-laid table, plans are tossed around: Paris for the weekend, Athens the next, concerts, parks, museums, and all that one must see whilst visiting. I am a very slow and deliberate traveler, so I deduced that more than fifty percent of this will never really happen.

Pleasure in the fall

Walking in the fall is such a pleasure. Before my departure, my Dutch friends in Manila shared insights that helped extremely well in understanding the culture and sub-cultures in such a complex city. For one the Dutch, by history, are averse to ostentatious display of wealth.

Paintings by the 15th century Dutch Masters (who, by the way, also used a lot of black) portray austere but strong subjects, a hint of wealth discreetly depicted only through a pearl-like reflection of fantastic Dutch light. Lively floral numbers remind viewers of the impermanence of material possession. This frugality is so ingrained in the present-day egalitarian Dutch psyche, where all are equal.

Aside from the benefits of walking as exercise, I use it to acquaint myself with the locality. Once that is accomplished, the best way to really get around is to rent a bicycle at 10 euro for the day. Here, cyclists are not only the kings of the roads, they are also champions of conserving artificial energies, like fuel—hence, no air pollution. The Dutch are extremely conscientious about the environment. Green Peace holds its headquarters in an Art-Deco building by another major canal. The edifice is a strong reminder of the seriousness of their advocacy.

I am amazed at the ease with which other bikers go about their merry way. They don't pay much attention to the road—mothers going off to work with one baby in hand, another hand steering the bike, the other child clinging on to her back! An older child would perhaps have her own bicycle. Not to mention those that have their meals while in motion. Even old folk speed up from behind!

A SURPRISINGLY very quiet city.

As evening falls and city lights perk up, one gets a glimpse of the interiors of proud and neat Amsterdam flats. Dictated by history that has become a sort of tradition, the Dutch keep their windows open, showing that they are well within the confines of practical living. This is when the colors come out! Behold interiors in bright shades of red and other rich hues, fireplaces aglow, lamps of all sorts, works of art, and flowers! It is obvious that this country is at the helm of the floral industry. Philaenopsis and amaryllis adorn most homes.

Soft drugs legal

Yet black is the dominant color of this city—countless edifices are painted in reddish black, deep black, or grey. Black also influences fashion. One fashion apparition—a gorgeous lady in an ivory coat, obviously wearing black underneath up to her feet, pushes a pram with her baby covered up to her chin in a fox blanket. In the background is a building in exactly the same color combination. The lady's sharp stylishness indicates that perhaps she is not a local!

Despite the wholesome overall appearance, soft drugs are legal in this country—tolerated but not appreciated if used flagrantly. Young visitors from nearby nations tend to abuse this fact. For crying out loud, they even have a cannabis museum! Coffee shops are limited to serving tea or soft drinks only. One goes to tegular cafés for a glass of wine or for jenever, the local Dutch spirit.

But there is that pervasive and distinct scent of ganja wafting in the air.

Homosexuality is still an issue in many cultures, but here it is totally accepted, respected, and institutionalized. I have come to visit my friends Frank and Barry, who recently got married. No need to fret, it happens almost everyday here! In the Dutch manner, there is no "he" or "she" in a marriage; it is something between two individuals.

Everyone speaks English, and the Dutch are a truly genial and beautiful folk. Getting on the train back to Schipol on my return flight home, a gentleman kindly guides me through the ticket machine, offering to pay part of my ticket when I discover I am short of euro coins. I turn to him, muttering profuse thanks in my pretentious American East Coast manner.

Why am I leaving this place?

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For women who already have the curves in the right places, a choice between two **Curvy** styles should give emphasis to what matters most in a lady—small waist, ample hips. Both jean types sit below the waist to achieve the emphasis on the curves.

The first type is a pair of flared jeans with whiskers and the denim look of the season—sandblast that gives the material a natural worn look. The other style is a stretch bootcut pair with stitches and rivets detailing.

Full-sized women should be happy to know that CDN Canadian Club Jeans also have a choice of style that's all their own. The first is a high-waisted pair that has roomy thighs and straight legs to make for a comfortable fit. This variety runs up to size 38.

The other style is a bootcut pair, relaxed through hips and thighs. Bolder women can get this pair in stretch fabric. Both pair types runs up to size 38 for more choices.

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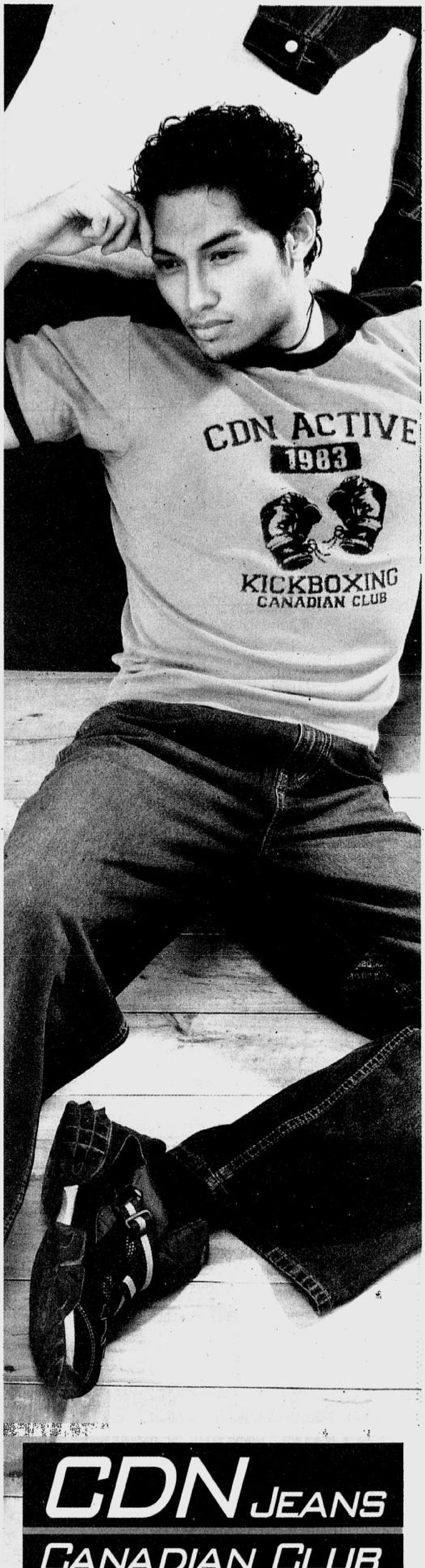

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Alicia Keys keeps fame in perspective with sophomore album

NEW YORK—The pressure of following up a multiplatinum, Grammy-winning album is enough to give even veteran artists nervous fits.

So, 22-year-old Alicia Keys—whose debut album sold more than 10 million copies worldwide and won a record-tying five Grammys—must be feeling a bit apprehensive about the release of her sophomore disc, "The Diary of Alicia Keys," this week.

Happy to disappoint

Keys knows that's what everyone expects to hear—and she's happy to disappoint them.

"They're dying! They're like, 'Please Alicia, just say it, say it! Say that you feel terrible,'" Keys laughed during an interview with the Associated Press backstage at MTV, where she was preparing for yet another promotional appearance.

"But I'm really able to keep things in perspective. I don't look at myself as how people describe me, as a five-time Grammy Award-winning, 10-platinum artist—I don't see myself like that," Keys says.

"I look in the mirror and that's not what I see. I just see me. I just see a young woman that's searching and growing and changing and just trying to hold on to something good."

The success of 2001's "Songs in A Minor" was more than something good—it was spectacular!

Keys was introduced by music mogul Clive Davis on his J Records label and hyped as a superstar in the making. And Keys—a classically trained pianist with stunning looks and soulful, powerful pipes that recall Whitney Houston or Mariah Carey—lived up to her billing.

First single

Her first single, the dramatic ballad, "Fallin'," went to No. 1 on the charts, and she was only the second woman besides Lauryn Hill to receive five Grammys in one night (Norah Jones repeated the feat earlier this year). The album sold more than five million copies in the United States.

In a little less than a year, Keys went from fledgling to superstar—and the instant fame took a little getting used to. Yet, she handled the sudden change in a low-key manner, according to those close to her.

"Alicia's always been a very private person, and I think she always will be," says her manager, Jeff Robinson, who has been with Keys since she was a teen.

"You have to have that balance. People who seek out the camera 24-7 are always doomed to have a bad spot on 'Page Six' someday."

Keys credits her attitude to a close-knit group of friends and family—like her mother, who works as her assistant. And on the surface, she doesn't seem to have changed much at all.

KEYS. Classically trained pianist with stunning looks and soulful pipes. REUTERS

She still sports her cornrow hairstyle, though a little less frequently. She hasn't converted herself into a glammed-up diva or sexpot. She tries to stay away from the spotlight when she's not performing, eschewing late-night, A-list parties. And she still speaks with the same streetwise, New York accent.

Sane

"That's the reason why I'm (expletive) sane, I promise you, is because I don't believe my own hype," she says with a smile. "If I believed my own hype right now, you'd be talking to a majorly different person, I can guarantee that."

But she does believe in her own talent. Ask how she thinks her new album will do, and she beams with a confidence that borders on cockiness.

"I know this album is the bomb," she says. "This album is going to do what it's supposed to do, and it's going to do darned good!" *AP*

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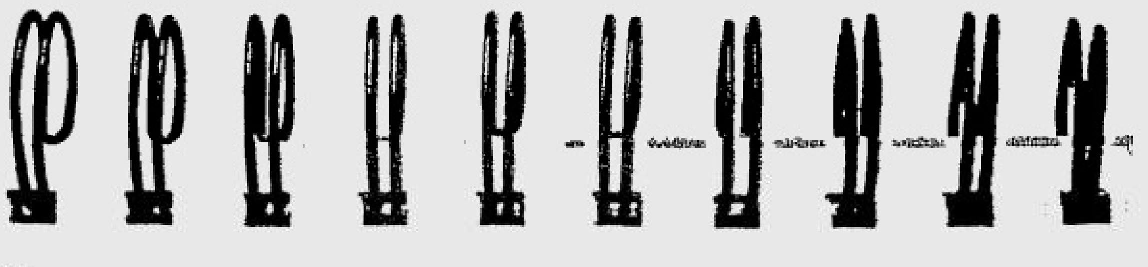

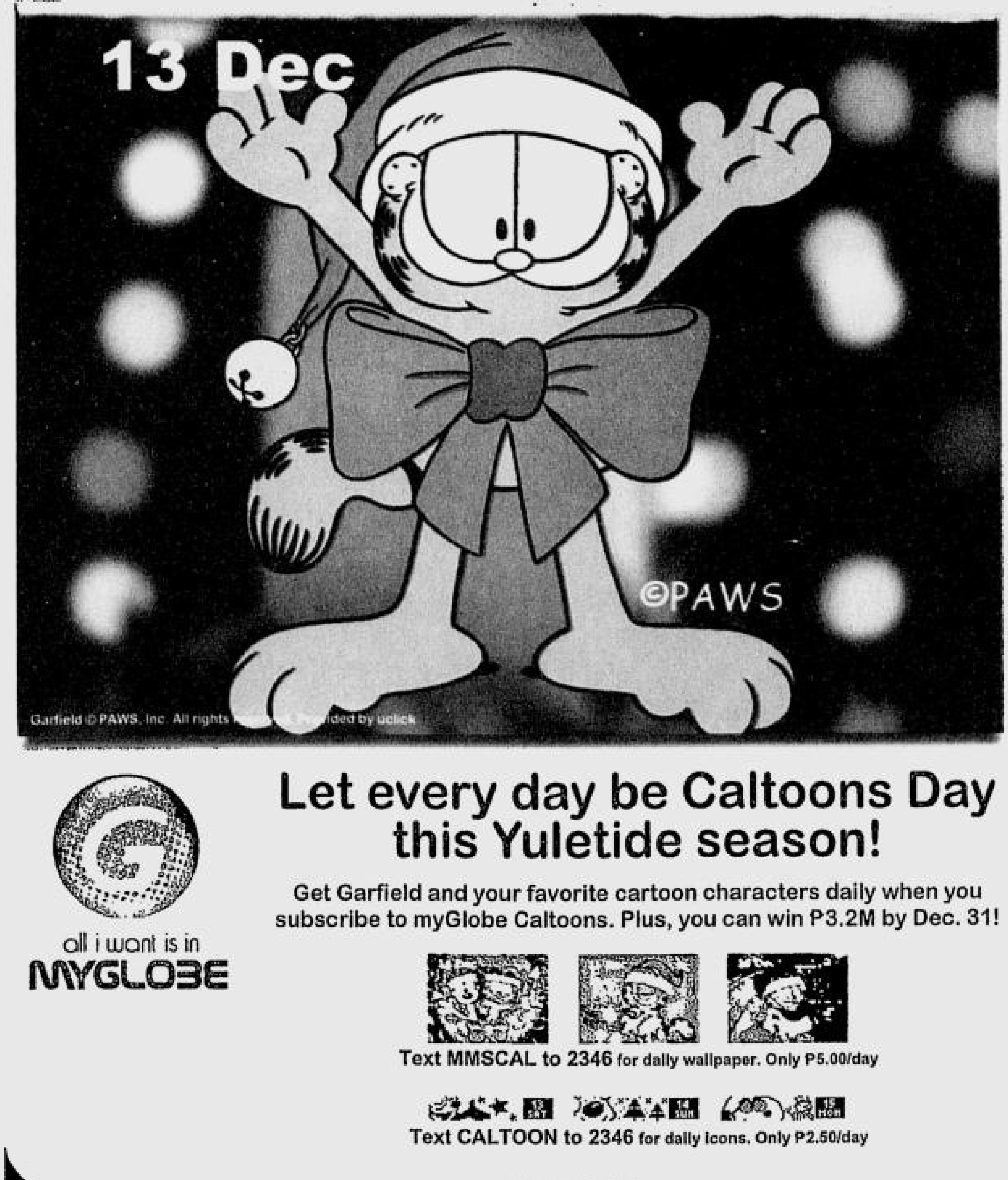
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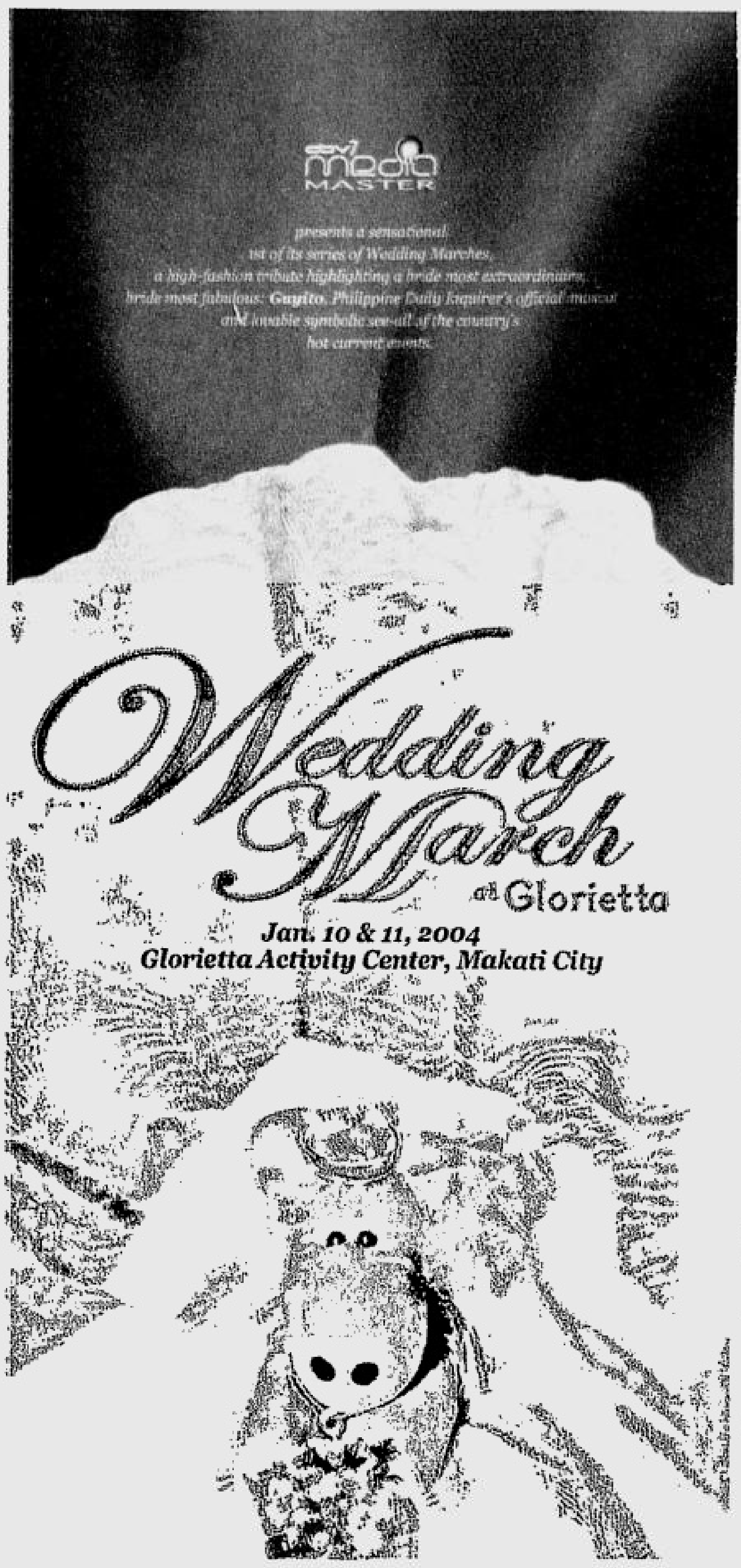
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Wedding March at Glorietta
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- *On Exhibit*
  Guyito in Haute Couture bridal gowns by 10 of the Philippines' top fashion designers. Ben Farrales, Inno Sotto, Patis Tesoro, Eddie Baddeo, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, Frederick Peralta, Jojie Lloren, Bobby Navarro and Eric Pineda
- *Dress-Up Guyito Wedding March Contest*
  In cooperation with Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the major activities of this event is this competition to dress up Guyito, PDI's official mascot. Please see contest mechanics below.
- *Acoustic Night*
  A free concert featuring: Jimmy Bondoc, Paolo Santos, Nyoy Volante and Nina
- *Raffle Draws*
  Open to suppliers/exhibitors and couples/guests
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Dress Up Guyito Wedding March
Contest Mechanics

1. The contest is open to all aspiring amateur designers 18 years old and above.
2. One pair of Guyito doll entitles a contestant to one entry form. The dolls must be purchased by the contestant starting Dec. 1 to Dec. 26, 2003 from the Philippine Daily Inquirer main office at:
   Philippine Daily Inquirer Building
   Don Chino Roces Avenue
   cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
   Each pair costs P250.00. A contestant may submit as many entries as he/she wants.
3. The contest theme is "Guyito's Wedding March". A contestant is tasked to dress up the doll pair in wedding ensembles (as bride and groom) of his/her own design. No perimeters shall be set with the design.
4. Criteria for judging will be based on the following: Relevance to Theme (30%), Originality (30%) and Creativity (40%). Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbv7 Media Master will be present during the judging of the contest.
5. Deadline for submission of entries is on Dec. 29, 2003, 9am to 6pm at the Philippine Daily Inquirer Head Office Marketing Department. Look for Hazel Sarlogo and Mony Cabahal.
6. Judging date will be on January 5, 2004 at Philippine Daily Inquirer main office in Don Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo), corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City at 2pm. A DTI representative shall be invited to witness the selection of the winners.
7. Winners will be notified thru phone, registered mail and will also be published in Philippine Daily Inquirer.
8. All winning entries shall automatically become the exclusive property of PDI and may be used, copied, reproduced into any size or medium for exhibition, advertising, promotion, or similar purposes. All non-winning entries will be returned to the contestants after the awarding ceremonies.
9. PDI reserves and maintains all intellectual property rights.
10. Prizes as follows:
    1st prize : P15,000 cash
    2nd prize : P10,000 cash
    3rd prize : P5,000 cash
    All cash prizes are tax free.
11. All winning entries will be displayed during the Wedding March at Glorietta in Makati City on Jan. 10, 2004. Awarding will be done on Jan. 10, 2004 at 7pm. Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbv7 Media Master will be present during the awarding.
12. Winners must present any valid I.D.s (driver's license, passport, or any I.D. with picture) when claiming the prize.
13. The decision of the Board of Judges of the Dress Up Guyito Wedding March Contest contest is final and unappealable with the concurrence of the DTI.
14. Employees of PDI, cbv7 Media Master, their advertising agency, dealers, all participating outlets and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining this promotion.
15. Only entries received until Dec. 29, 2003 are qualified for the contest. A participant can send more than one entry but can only win once.
16. PDI and cbv7 Media Master reserve the right to publish or display any entry, winning or non-winning, for promotional purposes, without permission or payment of any kind to the owner of the Guyito doll.

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Event Stylist: Rachy Cuna

Fred Montilla remembered

By Nestor U. Torre

We join other show biz colleagues in mourning the death last week of veteran actor Fred Montilla. We once worked with Fred on a film project, and found him a versatile actor and a good friend.

Our last conversation with him was for the book about Sampaguita Pictures and the Vera-Perez family that Manay Ichu Maceda has asked us to write. We found Fred physically weak, but his wry wit was as deft as ever, as evinced by his humorous recollections of some of his career highlights.

Co-stars

Fully 50 years after his start in the movies as one of the Sampaguita studio's most versatile stars, Fred could still recall his experiences with some of his co-stars and directors:

"Gerry de Leon wasn't only a director—he also acted in some movies. He studied medicine at UST. His sideline to make some money was playing the piano for silent film screenings at a theater in Sta. Cruz.

"Tita Duran—she always tried to do her best.

"Acting with Paraluman—she was rather ladylike, but effective on the screen. And, what a beautiful face!

"As a director, Rosa Mia was full of emotion—even when the camera was being moved for another set-up, she was still emoting.

Very efficient

"Octavio Silos was pragmatic and very efficient. *Gusto niya ng* dialogue *na aantig sa puso.* I helped him with the dialogue, adding some of my own touches.

"*Sabi ko kay* Tita Duran, '*Bumalik ka sa akin, at tatanggapin kita ng buong puso.*' He liked that.

"*Magaling siya sa* camera tricks, *tulad ng ulong pugot sa* 'Tulisang Pugot,' and the visual effects in 'Kerubin.'

"Gerry and Eddie Romero used to edit their own movies. Tor Villano took one month to shoot a film; Gerry, three months.

"*Ang* shooting style *ni* Gerry: *Kukunan niya ang eksena ng* full shot, then he went to a medium shot, then close-up—so, *magastos.* Not like some other directors, *tuloy-tuloy ang* shot, *nagpa*-panning *na lang.*"

What about his biggest hit, "Bondying," how did he clinch the much-coveted title role? "No, it was the other way around, I didn't want to play Bondying. *Hinahabol ako ni* Doc Perez for an entire year! Van de Leon and Rogelio dela Rosa wanted the role very much, but Doc said, "*Si* Fred *lang ang bagay!*

MONTILLA. His biggest hit was "Bondying."

Practical jokes

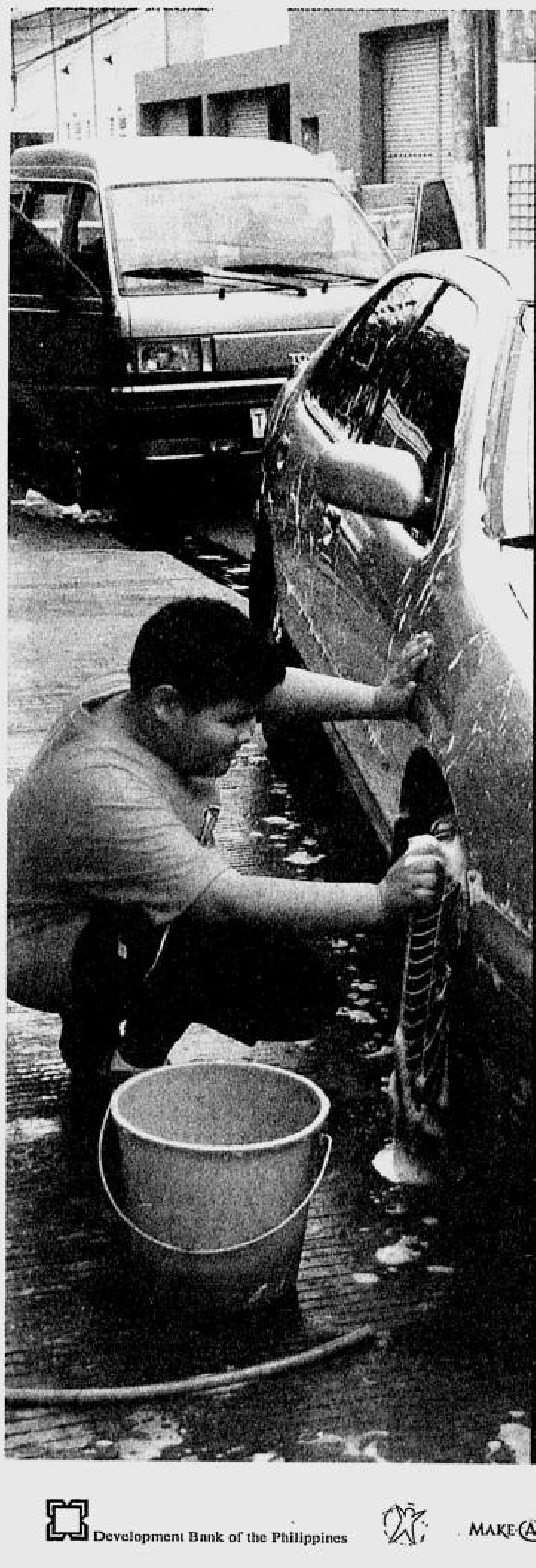
"Why? Because I was known to be a practical joker. Well, after saying no for one year, Doc's persistence wore me down, and I finally agreed to play the retarded character. *Mabuti na lang!* It did wonders for my career. Another good movie I made was Eddie Romero's 'Buhay Alamang.'

"I keep getting asked: Why were Sampaguita movies so popular? Always, my answer is: 'The studio's *stars* were popular. And they were popular because the studio knew how to discover and develop us."

We asked Fred why he thought Filipinos loved going to the movies. His analysis: "Because it's still one of the most affordable ways to be entertained. Even if ticket prices have gone up, movies on VHS *ay mura pa rin. At hindi ka na lalabas ng bahay.*

"Also, because our audience is perennially youthful. Young people are always eager to watch films. *Kaya bihira ang* old star *na tinatangkilik pa rin dito.*

"The exceptions, like FPJ and Dolphy, put up their own film production companies, and had the foresight to preserve their movies, which are still making a lot of money for them today, when they're shown on television."



He's helped a 5-year old cancer victim, and he can't even spell chemotherapy.

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Veritable hodgepodge of filmic tastes

By Rito P. Asilo

(Conclusion)

IF you're familiar with the classic Japanese white-knuckler, Hideo Nakata's "The Ring," you won't find anything new in Takashi Shimizu's "Ju-on: The Grudge."

The movie, the last part of a Japanese trilogy which began as two one-hour TV movies whose enormous popularity led to the feature film finale, centers on a house where a family was murdered and whose victims' ghosts wreak havoc on anyone who enters its premises.

Unlike "The Ring," though, the story is told in non-linear narrative that perplexes more than it clarifies. The mood of the movie, nevertheless, is characterized by a constant feeling of ominous dread.

Scare tactics

The scare tactics of the film still work, though. The moviehouse was filled with people who knew that sinister images were going to scare the living daylights out of them—and they were more than happy to indulge in screaming fits of fear and grotesque fun.

Peter Weir's "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" is an exuberant high-seas period adventure that sweeps you into another place and time. Based on the novels of Patrick O'Brian about the naval exploits of Capt. Jack Aubrey (Russell Crowe) onboard the British HMS Sunrise during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century, the movie is anchored by the compelling and complementary performances of Crowe and Paul Bettany (the ship surgeon), as well as Weir's focused, deft direction.

Swashbuckling fight scenes in all their highly detailed glory are not the only attraction that makes this movie work. More than the well-choreographed battle scenes (between the English and French troops), what makes it truly engaging is its attention to character development.

Subplots are employed to introduce important characters. When bodies fall mortally wounded, you feel a sense of loss because the characters are no mere statistical, logistical pawns needed to fill a movie screen—you know these people!

Big mouth

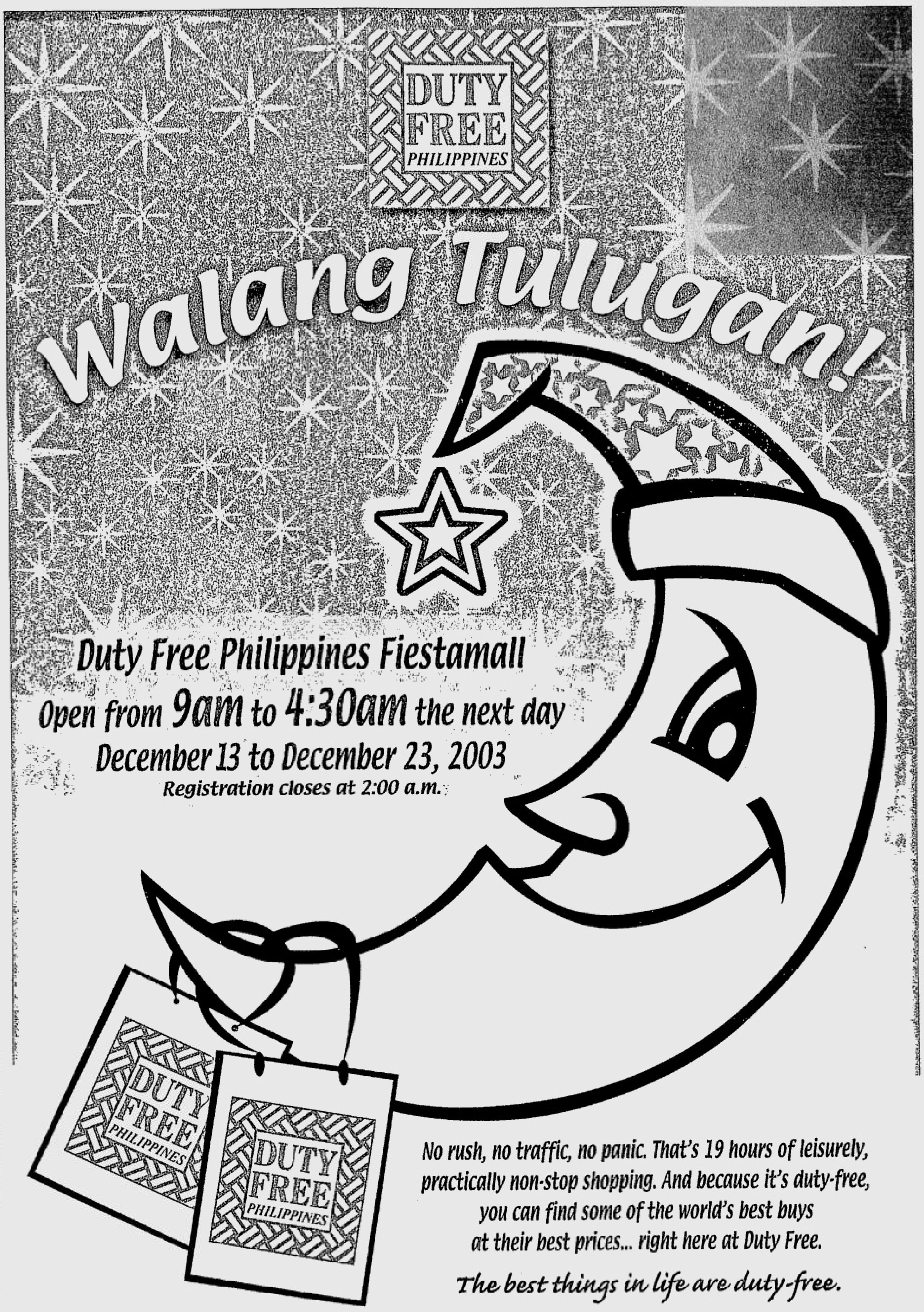
Crowe may not be well-liked in Hollywood, but his movie-star charisma is undeniable on the big screen. And if his big mouth doesn't hurt his chances, another Oscar nomination may be forthcoming. (He recently announced he had no intention of showing up at the Oscars even if he gets nominated.)

In Mike Figgis' psychological thriller, "Cold Creek Manor," a family relocates from the city to a house in the country. Its former owner (Stephen Dorff) helps renovate the old estate. But the new owners soon discover that their home harbors dark secrets and a horrific past.

The film's predictability may be its biggest blunder. Even its stellar charismatic cast (Sharon Stone, Dennis Quaid, Dorff) can't save the hollow, overused storyline. Figgis may be better off doing his searing, low-budget dramas. As a thriller, "Cold Creek Manor" just doesn't deliver the thrills.

If you want to watch movies,which have a clear grasp of their objectives, go catch "Jeepers Creepers 2" and "The Fighting Temptations." They may have paper-thin plots and one-dimensional characters, but they deliver the goods—the first one will scare the bejesus out of you, while the second will entertain with its thumping, sizzling musical numbers.

CROWE. His movie-star charisma is undeniable on the big screen.



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Dec. 25	9am - 7pm	9am - 7pm	9am - 7pm Registration closes at 6:15pm
Dec. 31	6am - 7pm	6am - 7pm	9am - 7pm Registration closes at 6:15pm
Jan. 1, 2004	9am - 9pm	9am - 9pm	STORE CLOSED

Cebu Stores

DATE	MACTAN	WATERFRONT
Dec. 24	Departure/Arrival 6am - 7pm	9am - 5pm
Dec. 25	Departure/Arrival 6am - 2pm	2pm - 6pm
Dec. 31	Departure/Arrival 6am - 7pm	9am - 5pm
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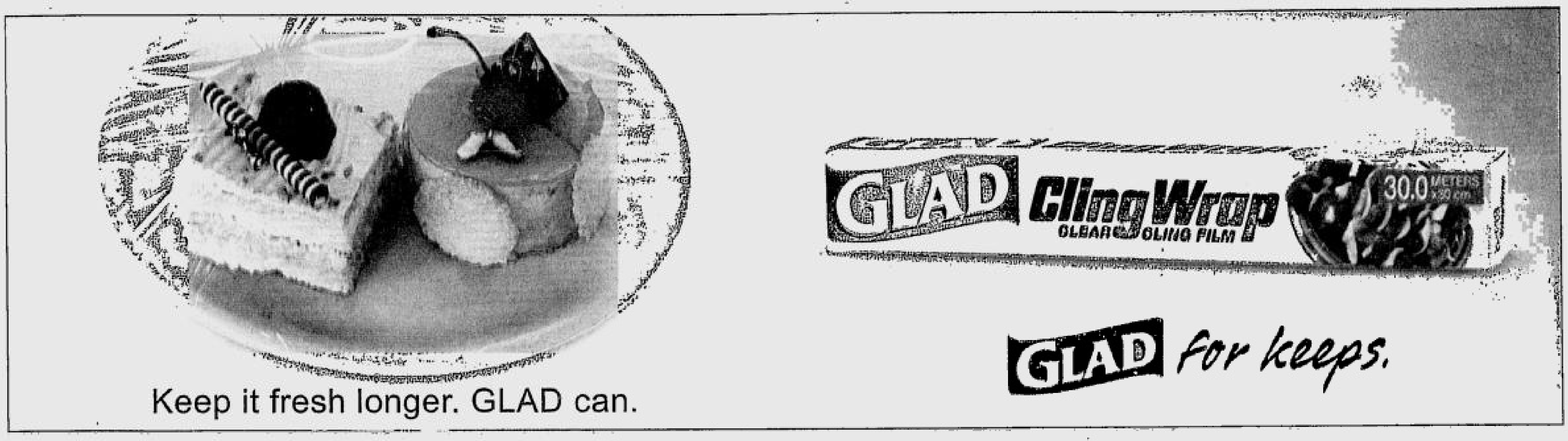

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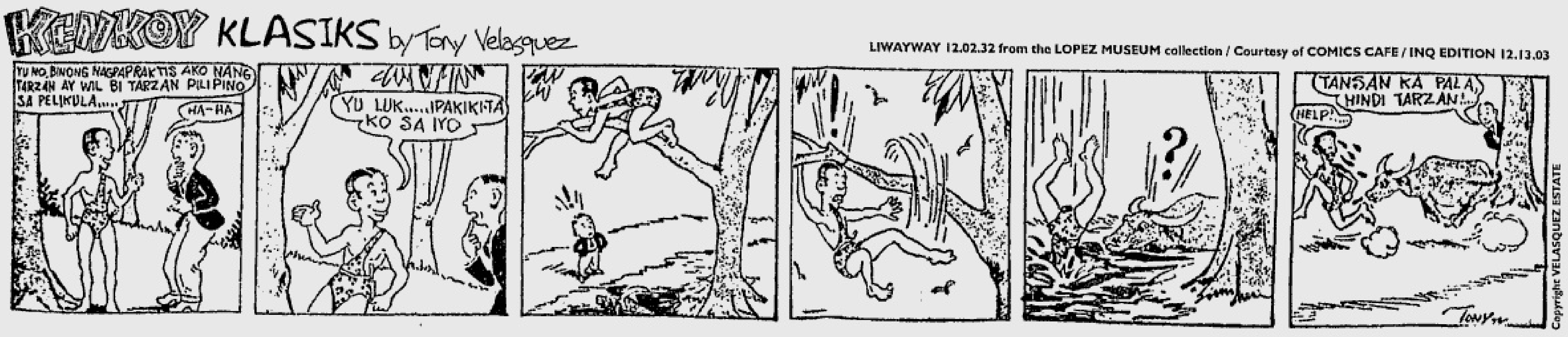
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Comprehensive look at one of pop music's biggest stars

By Noelani Torre

THINGS aren't going too well for Michael Jackson nowadays—not that they have been for the past decade—but you have to admit that releasing a new album and then getting accused (once again) of child molestation makes for a seriously big mess, even by "Wacko" Jacko standards.

Hoopla

Truth to tell, we are getting tired of the hoopla over him. Granted it isn't as bad as it was 10 years ago, but it's still exasperating, and even though we do understand the reason for all the attention—big star, sordid accusations—we just don't want to see yet another mug shot of what is, to put it kindly, a rather unsettling mug.

Meanwhile, with everybody focusing on this latest scandal, MJ's little album, "Number Ones" (Epic/Sony), has shrunk into the corners of record stores.

Released a day before the highly publicized police raid of his Neverland ranch, "Number Ones," unlike the songs in it, seems doomed to chart obscurity.

Still, this is Michael Jackson we're talking about, the bestselling artist of all time, and one of his generation's biggest stars. Obscurity for him means a number one debut on the UK charts and the 13th slot in the US sales charts on its first week—negligible, of course, compared to 1982's "Thriller" which sold a still-to-be-topped 46 million copies.

Since the first molestation rap, the self-styled King of Pop's lifestyle has been getting more and more eccentric, engendering a media infamy equaled only by his earlier fame. We've been bombarded with stories of his odd behavior for so long now that it's hard to remember why we even paid attention to him in the first place.

Newest single

"Number Ones" answers this question quite satisfactorily. With 17 number one tracks from debut album, "Off the Wall," to 2001's "Invincible," this album reminds us just how big Michael Jackson's star was, and how much he has influenced and shaped popular music. Also included is his newest single, the R. Kelly-written "One More Chance." (Interestingly enough, R. Kelley is also facing charges of child molestation!)

Though this is his second greatest hits collection in eight years, it is more comprehensive than the first, 1995's "HIStory: Past, Present and Future, Book 1," as it includes tracks from the aforementioned and from "Invincible."

MICHAEL
JACKSON
NUMBER
ONES

JACKSON. Still famous despite upheavals in his personal life.

Growth

Arranged chronologically, the album allows us to track Michael Jackson's growth as an artist—or, as some would have it, his decline.

The album kicks off, or rather bops off, with "Off the Wall's" "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough" and "Rock With You," both number one US hits. The first earned Jackson a Grammy, and it is this album that marked his transition from the endearing lead of Jackson 5 to powerful solo performer and pop icon.

Produced by Quincy Jones, the album was highly polished and heralded the new Jackson sound, a blend of disco, pop and soul that would reach its peak in the two following albums, the mega-hit, "Thriller" and 1987's "Bad."

"Thriller" is represented in this collection by four of its most memorable songs—"Billie Jean," "Beat It," "Thriller," and "Human Nature."

Here, the disco flavor still shows in places, but the attitude is a great deal spunkier (take Eddie Van Halen's rock-y guitar in "Beat It"), and the carefree sound of "Off the Wall" has darkened to a maturity that is tenser and more textured.

Eight Grammys

It is this album, winner of eight Grammies, that catapulted Michael Jackson, once merely a famous pop star, into pop iconhood. This standing would be cemented by the not quite as successful but nevertheless strong "Bad," represented in this collection by "I Just Can't Stop Loving You," "Bad," "The Way You Make Me Feel," "Dirty Diana," and "Smooth Criminal."

"Bad" spawned five number one US hits, but its sound is more an extension of "Thriller" than a new development. Still, also Jones-produced, it's as highly polished as its predecessors, and to further boosted Jackson's career.

The departure of Jones from the Jackson camp seemed to signal the decline of Jacko's artistic career—compare the abovementioned songs to the rest of the tracks in the collection—"Dangerous" upbeat but dangerously schmaltzy "Black Or White," "HIStory's" "You Are Not Alone" and "Earth Song," "Blood On The Dance Floor," and "Invincible's" "You Rock My World" and "Break of Dawn."

Slick production

Though hits, and justifiably so with their slick production, generally catchy rhythms and touches of musical innovation here and there, they don't quite measure up to the pre-"Dangerous" glory days.

As for the new single, "One More Chance," it's as well crafted as ever, but it lacks the oomph that Michael Jackson used to bring to all his best works. And, given the events of the past weeks, the title itself is ironic.

All in all, "Number Ones," gives us a fairly inclusive look at one of pop music's greatest stars. It reminds us that Michael Jackson is famous in spite and not because of the upheavals in his personal life.

What's in store for global entertainment?

By Ronald G. Mangubat

WHEN we surfed the internet the other day searching for interesting media stories, we stumbled upon a website which led us to thousands of other websites about future global entertainment trends.

Futurists

Most of these are academic documents researched and written by sociologists, media experts and futurists, who make both positive and negative predictions on how global entertainment will be like in the coming years.

What we found out might interest local producers and those in the TV and film industries who are on the lookout for possible windows of opportunities in the future.

According to Plunkett Research Ltd., a US-based market and industry research company, demographic changes, new technology, evolving financial structures, legal wrangling and globalization are already creating chaos and forging new trends in entertainment and media.

Almost all documents we read point to both the internet and info-tech revolution as powerful vital forces that will dramatically change the complexion of global entertainment.

For example, because of the info-tech revolution, the entertainment industry has turned into one of the largest creators of new jobs around the world.

In the US alone, jobs in the entertainment field grew from 1.5 million in 1988 to over three million this year.

Competitiveness

Because of this development, scholars say that traditional media enterprises must learn to adapt new internet and computer technologies to maintain competitiveness. They predict that the convergence of the Net with television, cellular phones and other wireless devices will create many new media channels.

This does not mean that people will stop buying books and newspapers, or will shy away from watching movies in cinemas. The niche is for producers to aggressively make use of the internet to complement existing distribution methods and develop new products.

For the past few years, animated productions have grown in popularity, starting from "Beauty and The Beast" up to "Finding Nemo." Experts predict that this trend will continue because of animation's relatively low production costs compared to major live films.

The genre is also going to be popular on internet sites and will be widely used in internet-delivered entertainment.

Good news

Since Filipino animators are considered to be among the best in the world (remember that Bahay Kubo in the aquarium scenes of "Finding Nemo"?), this is definitely good news to all Pinoy animators.

The research company also noted that since moviemaking and marketing are becoming so expensive worldwide, studios are getting rid of expensive stunts, special effects and big-name stars. The trend, therefore, is to discover new actors, actresses, writers and directors.

In the field of music, a website on Eastern trends predicts that, in the next few years, Asian music will be a major force to reckon with in North America, UK, Canada, etc.

This is because of the massive Asian communities that have been mushrooming in almost all parts of the globe, and the growing number of global citizens who hop from one continent to another as though they were merely traveling from Makati to Cubao.

Cultural fusion

But instead of pure Asian music, the trend will be toward cultural fusion, like UK-Indian, Canadian-Thai, and French-Vietnamese.

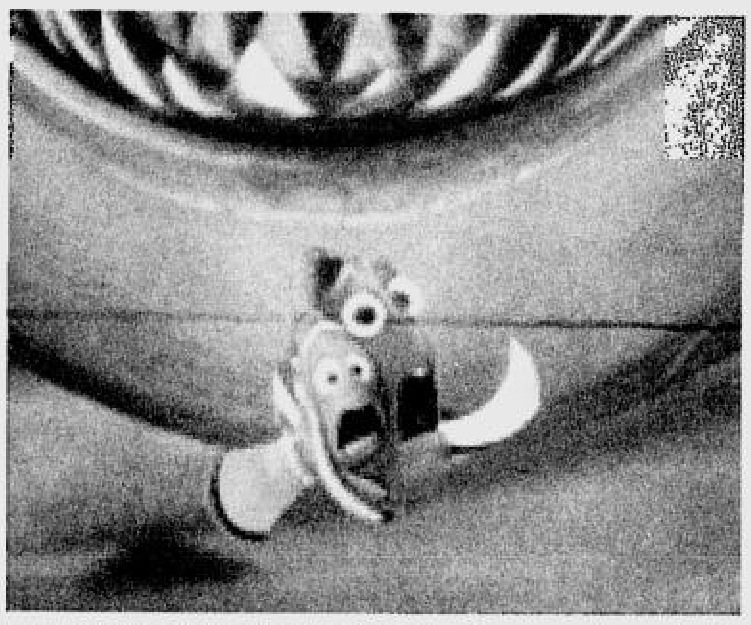
This cultural cross-pollination is an exciting development to look forward to. With Filipinos based in many countries, plus our world-class musicality, could a Filipino-Tanzanian rap hit or an Irish-Filipino ballad be far behind?

Other notable predictions, this time from the Institute of Global Futures:

Advanced virtual reality bundled with digital agents and holographic entertainment worlds will transform our experience of entertainment.

Movie theaters will receive digital broadcasts and satellite downloads of movies, video conferencing and other interactive programming.

Digital TV will provide new programs where we will experience real-time participation with content, personalities and shows.



"FINDING NEMO." Animated productions have grown in popularity.

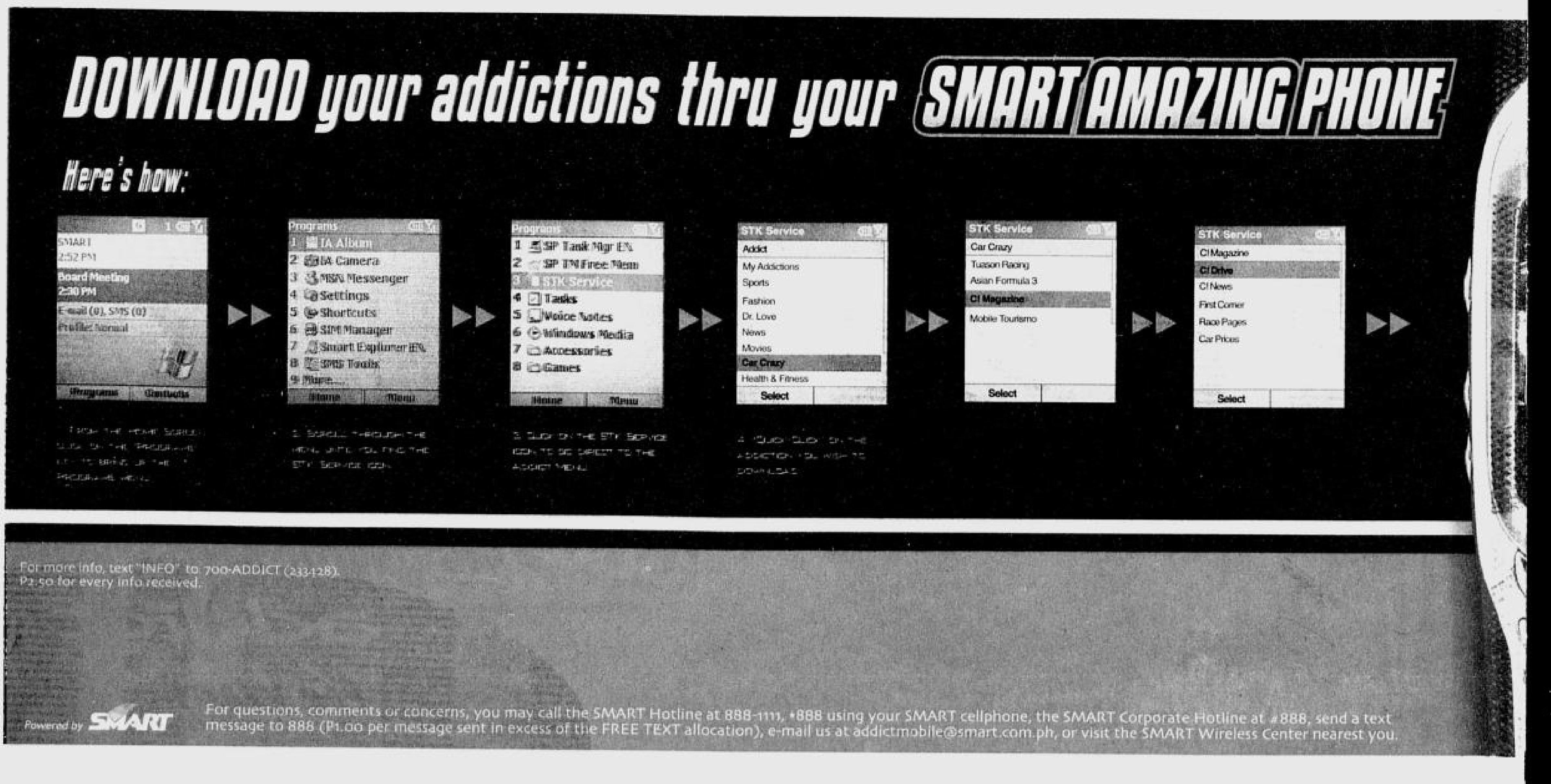
New genre

"Edutainment," the merger of entertainment and education, will offer a new genre of programming that will be greatly in demand.

Non-traditional entertainment producers, empowered by Power Tools, will change the industry, offering new products, channels and innovations.

It is obvious that technology will shape our future. But we hope that technological hardware won't eclipse its corresponding software.

What are special effects without a cogent story? What are digital broadcasts and satellite downloads without a substantial program? Let's brace ourselves for this exciting and challenging wave that might shake, move, sweep and rock all of us—soon!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Actor studied cats to develop Gollum's sinister voice

GOLLUM. 'LOTR's' schizophrenic cave-dweller.

BERLIN—Andy Serkis, the British actor who plays the bulging-eyed, schizophrenic cave-dweller Gollum in "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, said on Monday he studied his cats to develop his character's sinister throaty voice.

Classically-trained

"I found the voice from watching my cats at home," he told journalists in Berlin ahead of the European premiere of the last part of the "Rings" trilogy, "The Return of the King." "They lick the fur off their bodies, then it gets stuck in the back of their throats. When they get rid of it, they get fur balls and they get sick, and that became 'Gollum,' 'Gollum.'"

SERKIS. Supporters insist his performance in the trilogy merits an Oscar nomination.
AP PHOTO

A classically-trained stage actor, Serkis said playing the role of a creature obsessed with trying to seize the magic ring he calls "my precious" was challenging both for body and voice.

"I used to drink a lot of . . . 'Gollum' juice which was honey and lemon and ginger and fruit teas and stuff," he said.

Sense of desperation

"I had a lot of lower back injuries because I made this decision to make him crawl because he's an addict, and I wanted to reflect that sense of desperation."

Asked what he would do if he had the all-powerful but corrupting ring that is the focus of the trilogy, Serkis said, "I would banish all religions."

Serkis, 39, auditioned to provide the voice-over for a computer-generated Gollum, but director Peter Jackson was so impressed with his physical presence that he built the character on the actor's own movements using the latest technology.

40 animators

"He's such a psychologically complicated character that if you'd had 40 animators doing their separate shots, there would be no one person taking responsibility for the psychological journey of the character," Serkis said.

Serkis acted every scene featuring Gollum. He then repeated his actions wearing a special suit marked with dots that were monitored by 25 cameras and used to generate a computer image. Animators then copied his facial movements.

Even though the Gollum character looks sub-human onscreen with its translucent skin and huge head, people still recognize Serkis, especially when they see his watery-blue eyes.

"People do come up in the street . . . If they lock eyes with me, they run up to me with their phones and say, 'Can you speak to my sister as Gollum?'"

Serkis said there is talk his performance could be nominated for an Oscar for best supporting actor although there is no precedent for a digitally created character winning the award. The first two films won six Oscars in total, two for effects.

"A huge debate has been opened up about actors' performances in characters which are not traditionally enhanced," he said. "One thing is for certain, from now on, there will be more and more characters done in this way."

Reuters

'Diva 2 Diva' . . .

From page E7

At some point during the medley, it is quite hard to distinguish who is singing which song because both singers have relatively low voices and share almost the same vocal range. It is only through Padilla's occasional famous lilt (a "vocal affectation," as jazz singer Patti Austin calls it) that distinguishes her from Ledesma.

Spiritual search

The album's last cut, David Foster and Carole Bayer's "The Prayer," seems to be a fitting tribute to both singers' colorful lives and spiritual search. Their rendition mirrors their solemn quest for the Divine.

Through the years, Ledesma has collaborated with other female artists like Regine Velasquez, Jaya and Pops Fernandez, but she finally found her singing soulmate in Padilla.

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Potential blockbusters for 2004's first quarter

By Nestor U. Torre

TOPPING Warner Bros.' list of potential blockbusters for the first quarter of 2004 is Tom Cruise's period action thriller, "The Last Samurai." Set in Japan during the 1870s, the epic tells the story of Capt. Nathan Algren (Cruise), an American military officer hired by the Emperor of Japan to train the country's first army in the art of modern warfare.

Sense of honor

As the government tries to eradicate the samurai warrior class, Algren finds himself unexpectedly affected by his encounters with the traditional warriors, who are being eased out to make way for more Westernized policies. This places him at the center of a struggle between two eras and two worlds, with only his sense of honor to guide him.

Also keenly anticipated is "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban." Harry Potter and his friends, Ron and Hermione, return for their third year at Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The teenagers are forced to confront their darkest fears as they have to contend with an escaped prisoner and the similarly forbidding Dementors who are sent to protect them.

Brad Pitt also has a blockbuster-in-the making in "Troy," where he plays Achilles. Prince Paris of Troy (Orlando Bloom) has stolen beautiful Helen away form her husband, Menelaeus, the king of Sparta, prompting the two nations to wage war with each other.

The Greeks begin a bloody siege of Troy using their entire armada, led by Achilles. The siege lasts more than 10 years.

For his part, Jack Nicholson is playing a music executive in his new film, "Something's Gotta Give." He generally dates younger women, but he has a heart attack.

His latest trophy girlfriend (Amanda Peet) has gone back to the city, so he's left alone with her divorced mother (Diane Keaton), who takes care of him. The added complication is the fact that Nicholson's doctor (Keanu Reeves) competes with him as they both fall in love with Keaton's character.

Angelina Jolie's starrers haven't been doing well at the box-office lately, but she trusts that her latest film, "Taking Lives," will help her recoup her losses. In the suspense-thriller, Jolie shares stellar billing with Ethan Hawke and Olivier Martinez.

Jolie plays an FBI profiler hot on the trail of a serial killer who assumes the identities of his victims.

Romantic trip

Meanwhile, teen fave Mandy Moore plays the 18-year-old daughter of the president of the United States in "Chasing Liberty." She ditches her Secret Service handlers and sets out on a romantic trip through Europe with her boyfriend (Matthew Goode).

Finally, Mandy's first boyfriend, Billy Crawford, is starring in his first Hollywood film, "Exorcist: The Beginning." This much-awaited "prequel" tells the story of Fr. Merrin's brush with evil while working in Africa, which led to his first encounter with demonic forces.

Fr. Merrin is played by Stellan Skarsgard, while Crawfrod portrays a possessed teenager. His fans in the Philippines hope that the Fil-American singer-actor does well in his first US starrer!

CRAWFORD. Stars in his first Hollywood film.

MOORE. Topbills the teen romance, "Chasing Liberty."

PITT. Plays Achilles in "Troy."

Holiday suggestions

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

IT'S panic time once again. "What will I give my boyfriend's family, my boss, my pastor, etc.?" Fear not, I have a few suggestions.

Since I started writing for this newspaper, I have been given samples of various foodstuffs. Some of them are worth sharing with our readers.

Christmas gifts

Here are some suggestions for Christmas gifts that will definitely make an impact on the recipient. I have tasted all of these:

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2. *Ensaymada*—Mrs. Cunanan. Small, mean, moist and delicious! Tel. no. 631-0798.
3. *Bibingkang malagkit*—The best in the country. La Tasca. Tel. nos. 896-5543, 897-9749, 897-6056, 897-9872.
4. Rum cake—Sandy Romualdez. The yummiest rum cake ever. Tel. nos. 671-1089, 727-5013.
5. Food for the gods—Mara de la Rama. Tel. no. 635-3327.
6. Chicken *empanada*—Chris Ompaoco. Simply delicious! Tel. nos. 920-7282, 435-6958.

Baked fresh

7. Apple pie—Tina Tamesis. Delicious apple pie baked fresh everyday. Perfect with cheese. Tel. no. 727-5324.
8. Pecan pie and cinnamon rolls—Jack and Icee Colet. Tel. nos. 631-4221, 910-1363, 910-1364.
9. Pecan pie—Millet Soberano. Heavy and delicious! Tel no. 929-1090.
10. Heny Sison—Diva of the Pastry Kitchen. Ask her what she recommends. Her shop is loaded with delicious goodies. Tel nos.726-5316, 412-7792.
11. Mini-siopao—sioplets! A *pika-pika* favorite and superb midnight snack. Tel nos. 631-3450, 637-1448.
12. Tita Paring's *Suman Latik* The best in the East. Found in malls like SM Megamall (food court), Shangri-La, etc.
13. Chicken nuggets—Belcap. Comparable to McDo's. Tel. 929-9432.
14. Chocolate almond crunch—Ana Lorenzana De Ocampo. Tel. no. 809-1410.
15. Mango bars and fudge brownies—Gela's Kitchen. Tel nos. 852-5814, 852-6045.
16. Cebu *lechon*—Rico's Cebu Lechon. Tel nos. (032) 344-0119, (0917) 407-2033.

Perfectly sweet

17. Pandan cake and cheesecake—light pandan cake, perfectly sweet and unbelievable-tasting cheesecake, by Buddy Trinidad. Cellphone nos. 0918 901-7013.
18. Mango tarts—Rosanna Angeles. Tel nos. 415-6880, 721-2890.
19. Black and white chocolate mousse—Melanie Platito. Ask her about her bestsellers. Tel. nos. 436-1757, 0917 520-1307.
20. Galantina—Dulcinea. The best in town.
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22. Sugar-free desserts. For the "sweet-tooth" who wants to stay away from sugar. Lisa Asuncion's pastries are the best. You can hardly tell they have no sugar. Ask her about her bestsellers. Tel. nos. 631-7434, 0917 528-2707.
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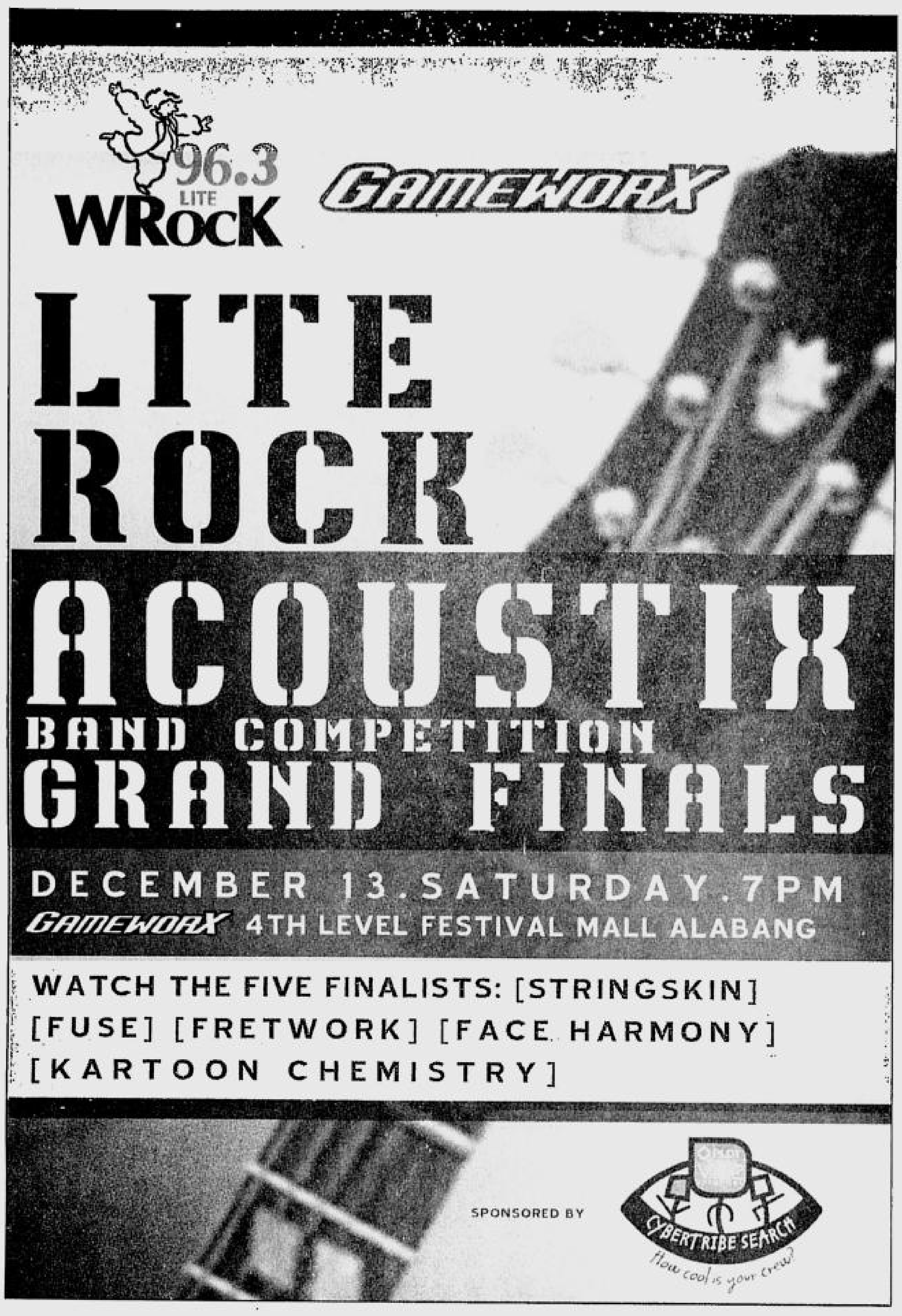
28. My latest discovery, slowly roasted Black Angus Prime Roast Beef. Made by Chefs Mon and Monique Eugenio with Chef Mel Resuma. They are gold medal winners in the Chefs on Parade competitions. I tried their Angus beef with Cabernet Sauvignon *shallot au jus*, and I almost fainted. It was superb! They also make a nice green peppercorn or Morel sauce with roast beef that can be made the centerpiece of any Christmas dinner. Call Mon at 0917 533-1155.
29. Chef Rox—Bottled sauces. Catering, too. Call 0917 538-3284.
30. Reasonably-priced catering—Call Penny for simple home-cooked food: 0919 327-1723 or tel. nos. 893-8348, 893-8359.

With all these suggestions, I suggest you postpone the idea of a diet and start your workout when your *balikbayan* relatives go back to their homes abroad.

Happy eating!

For comments e-mail sandydaza@shaw.ca



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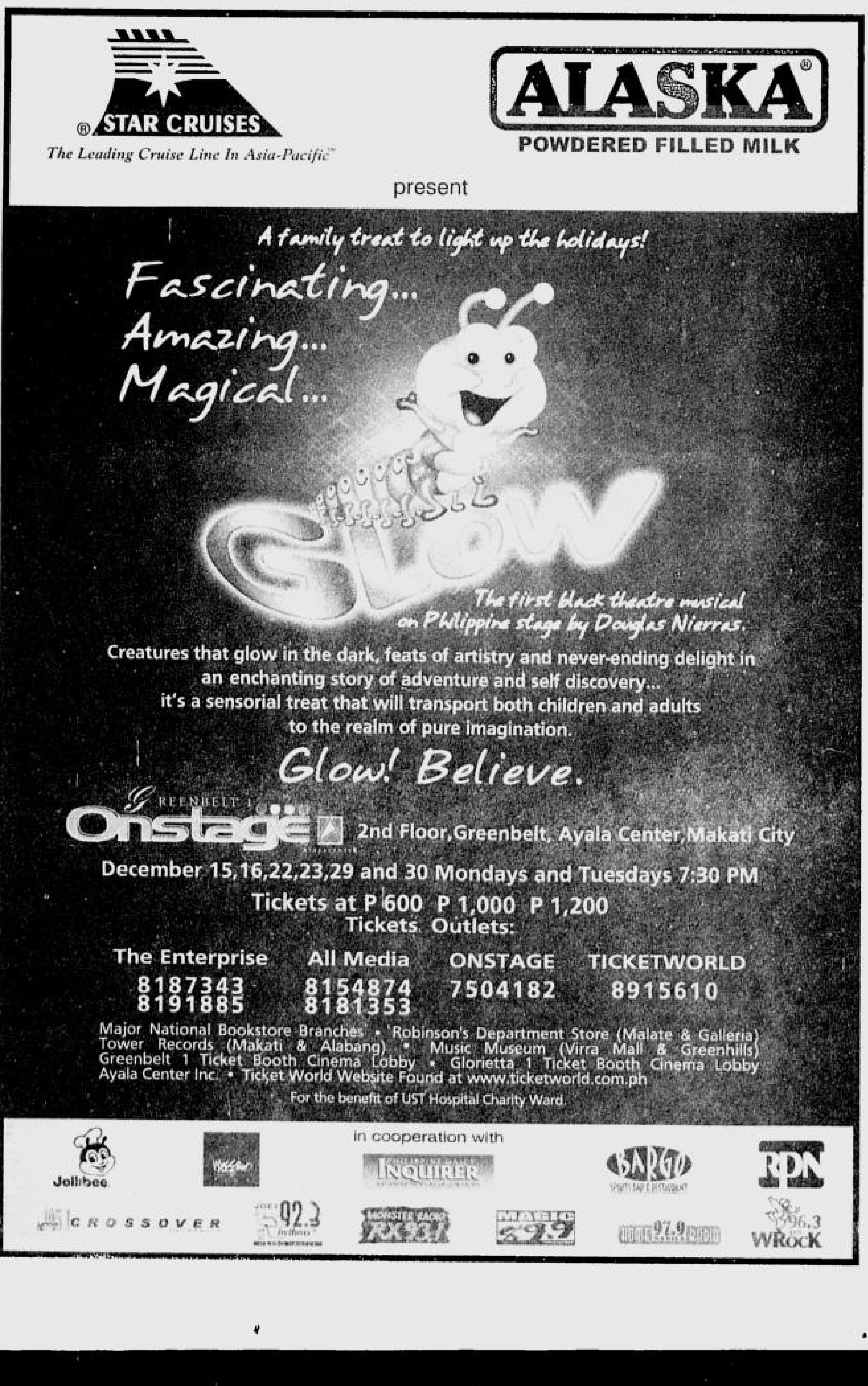

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'Diva 2 Diva' enlivened by combined musical vigor

By Ronald G. Mangubat

THE GLOSSY leaflet of their CD reads: "Two singular careers that could never have happened without you. And one magnificent concert that would never have taken place without your support. Now, we give you the album. Enjoy the music." For sentimental ballad lovers, this is an album which delights, relaxes and awakens romantic yearnings.

Longtime rivals

Kuh Ledesma and Zsa Zsa Padilla, longtime rivals on the local pop music scene, are at their sizzling best in this album—a studio recording of the highlights of their "Diva 2 Diva" concert staged at the PICC early this year.

Had they produced this album 10 years ago, there might have been a deliberate attempt to upstage each other.

But now that they've matured and have become confident about their respective places in the local entertainment world, their duets reflect this serene and sanguine attitude, and explode in a harmonious blend of bright musical colors.

Truly, this is a synergistic collaboration between two equally talented artists who want to make beautiful music together. The result scintillates in combined musical vigor.

Four medleys

There are four long medleys and four full songs in this album, with musical and vocal arrangements by Louie Ocampo, Homer Flores, Babsie Molina, Rey Cristobal and Egay Gonzalez.

The first cut, "Only Hope," sung by Mandy Moore in her movie "A Walk to Remember," is a haunting ballad about a woman's undying love and dependence on her lover.

This is followed by a classic medley, Bacharach's "One Less Bell/A House Is Not a Home," songs which evoke philosophical questions about love and loss.

On the other hand, fans of the musical, "Chess," will certainly wax nostalgic when they hear the popular "I Know Him So Well," the album's third cut, sung with just the right emotion by the two glamorous divas.

Popular duet

"Tell Him," Barbra Streisand and Celine Dion's popular duet, expresses the importance of verbally communicating and fighting for one's feelings for a loved one. Their version is less bombastic than the original, but is powerful, nonetheless.

Unique arrangement

Our favorite is the Legrand medley, featuring "Windmills of Your Mind," "The Summer Knows, "A Piece of Sky" and "Where Do I Begin?" The arrangement is unique, and Ledesma and Padilla's voices soar.

A unique treat of the album is "Divas Medley," a collection of four of their famous hits, with Ledesma singing Padilla's "Ikaw Lamang" and "Kahit Na," and Padilla rendering Kuh's "Paano Kita Mapasasalamatan?" and "Dito Ba?"

DIVA/ E5

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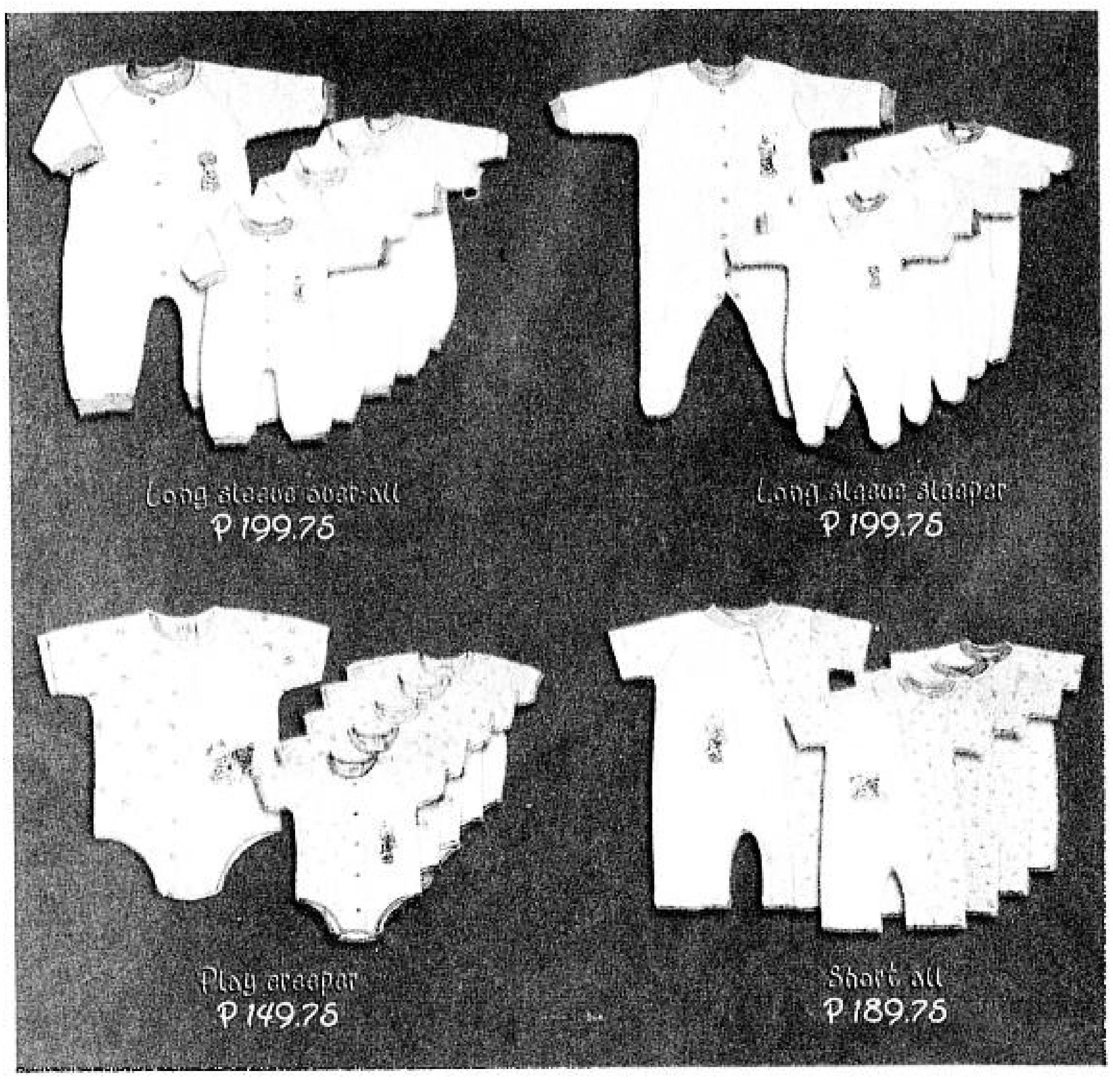

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DEC. 11, 2003

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
8:00am	EXHIBIT OPENS	ALONG SOTTO
4:00pm	RIBBON CUTTING	ASEAN GARDEN
6:00pm	PAMASKONG PASAKALYE CONCERT	INFRONT OF ALIW THEATER
10:00pm	FIREWORKS DISPLAY	CCP COMPLEX

DEC. 12, 2003

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
8:00am	ARRIVAL OF DELEGATES	STAR CITY
8:00am	EXHIBIT OPENS	ALONG SOTTO
10:00am	BRIEFING WITH REYNA NG ALIWAN CONTESTANTS	STAR CAFETERIA
1:00pm	WELCOME CEREMONY BRIEFING OF DELEGATES AND "PRINCESS OF THE MOON" PRESENTATION	ALIW THEATER
6:00pm	PAMASKONG PASAKALYE CONCERT	ALONG SOTTO
10:00pm	FIREWORKS DISPLAY	CCP COMPLEX

DEC. 13, 2003

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
8:00am	EXHIBIT OPENS	ALONG SOTTO
12:00nn	MOVE FLOATS TO QUIRINO	
3:00pm	ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES	QUIRINO GRANDSTAND
5:00pm	GRAND PARADE	QUIRINO GRANDSTAND TO CCP COMPLEX
9:00pm	AWARDS NIGHT CONCERT FIREWORKS DISPLAY	ALONG SOTTO

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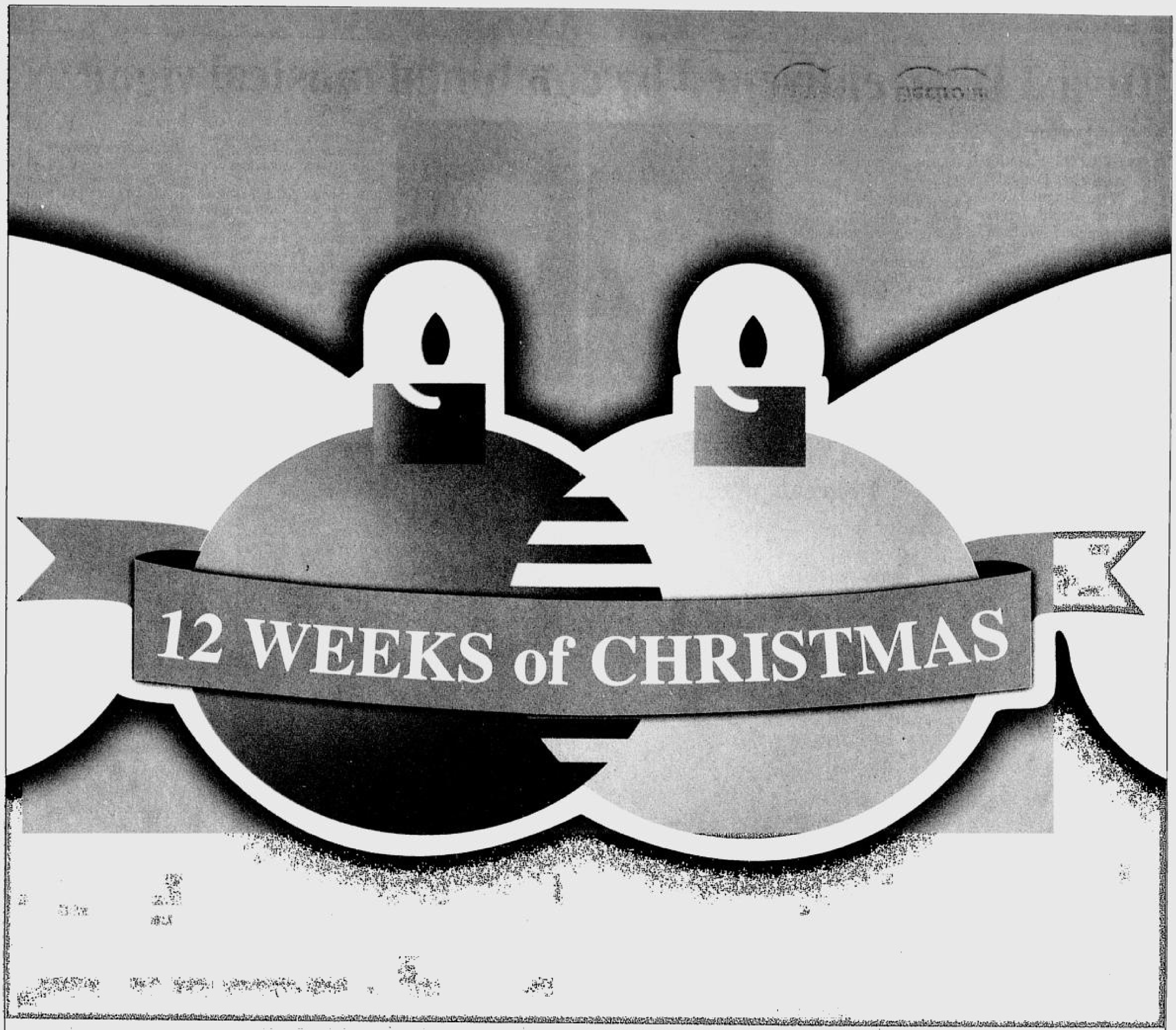

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SATURDAY *Special*

LeAnn Rimes recalls career as child star

RIMES. In control of her life after nine years. AP

NEW YORK—At 21, Grammy-winning singer LeAnn Rimes has already been in the music business for nine years—and only now does she feel in control of her career.

"After suing people and all that stuff, I'm coming into my own and really taking control of my life. I'm finally understanding it," she told AP Radio recently.

Countersuit

Rimes sued her father in 2000, alleging that he and former co-manager, Lyle Walker, had bilked her company out of more than $7 million over five years. Wilbur Rimes filed a countersuit against LeAnn Rimes Entertainment Inc. They settled the dispute in 2002.

The singer and Curb Records ended a year-long legal standoff in 2001. Rimes had claimed she didn't understand the original contract she signed when she was 12. In 1996, at 13, she scored the hit, "Blue," and became a star.

Children

Rimes, who is married to Dean Sheremet, said she hopes to have children, but won't encourage them to have music careers as early as she did, although she will help develop their talents if that's what they want to do.

"I've gone through a lot of pain and different things that I would never wish on a family or on a child," she said. "At 13, I had no clue, except that I wanted to sing." *AP*

SEINFELD. Will lend his voice to DreamWorks' "Bee Movie." AP

Seinfeld to star in animated comedy

LOS ANGELES—Television funnyman Jerry Seinfeld is to emerge from five years out of the spotlight to produce and star in a new animated comedy feature film for a Hollywood studio, makers said Tuesday.

Hit sitcom

The star of the hit US television sitcom, "Seinfeld," which ended in 1998, will make a computer-animated movie called "Bee Movie" for DreamWorks Pictures, the star and the studio said in a statement.

Plans for the movie—which Seinfeld dreamed up and in which he will star as the voice of a male bee in a cartoon world featuring the buzzing insects—came after a long courtship of the comic by the studio.

"Jerry Seinfeld is one of the most brilliant and unique comic minds of our time," said one of DreamWorks' three top bosses, Jeffrey Katzenberg.

"It has been a dream of mine for over 10 years to be in business with him, and during that time, I have been willing to put myself in any number of potentially humiliating situations in order to demonstrate my unflagging appreciation of his talent."

Professional sortie

The project marks the first major professional sortie by the globally known stand-up comedian and actor since his hit show ended after a nine-year run.

"I have always been fascinated by bee society, the world's most harmoniously run organization, and now I finally am going to be in it," said Seinfeld, 49.

DreamWorks SKG was formed in 1994 by Hollywood powerbrokers Steven Spielberg, Katzenberg and music mogul David Geffen to produce live-action and animated feature films. *AFP*

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 2755, Series of 2003

Talent show succeeds in discovering fine singers

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST Saturday, Channel 2's "Star in A Million" singing competition was down to six finalists from the original 10—two boys and four girls.

Given this mismatched ratio of males to females, we felt it was a fair bet that the finalist to be "dismissed" that night would be female.

VILLENA. Frank and specific comments.

Genuine standouts

When the six remaining finalists sang their solo numbers for the week, we observed that the two boys were pretty much evenly matched, but they were upstaged by three of the four girls, who were genuine standouts.

As for the fourth girl, she wasn't up to par, so we feared that she would be the finalist who would be eliminated that evening. Alas, our hunch turned out to be correct.

Of the three judges, we appreciated most the comments made by Mel Villena, which were frank and specific. For instance, he chided a finalist for aping the singing style of a foreign diva—a common fault of Filipino singers.

We trust that other singers watching the program took note of Mel's comment, and reminded themselves not to fall into that facile *gaya-gaya, puto-maya* and *plakadong-plakado* trap.

From the judges' scores, it appeared that they were favoring a male and a female singer, who could end up as the competition's "final finalists." But it's early days for that, so we won't carve their names in stone just yet.

Plus side

On the plus side, the fact that the singing contest has been going on for some weeks has compelled the finalists to develop their talents, firm up their resolve, and sharpen their competitive edge.

The results are an improvement over the usual singing competitions on TV, where talented amateurs aren't given enough time to keep working on getting their act together on a more professional level.

However, we are dismayed by the part of the show where the "weaker" finalists are required to talk to the judges and "convince" them not to eliminate them.

This is awkward and demeaning for the young talents, and should be dropped. Why should contestants have to persuade judges to be charitable to them?

Put-downs

This is aggravated by the show's put-downs, like "Will he live his life trying?" and "Is she destined to live away from the others?"

Have a heart. These are young people, and they should be subjected to as little stress and as few negative emotions as possible.

Still, we can see that the show is succeeding in discovering and developing some standout singers who have a good chance of launching successful performing careers after the contest is over—whether they win or not.

We just hope that the process won't be such an ordeal for them. After all, genuine talents should be encouraged to shine, not "tested" by being subjected to excessive stress and roller-coaster emotional ups and downs.

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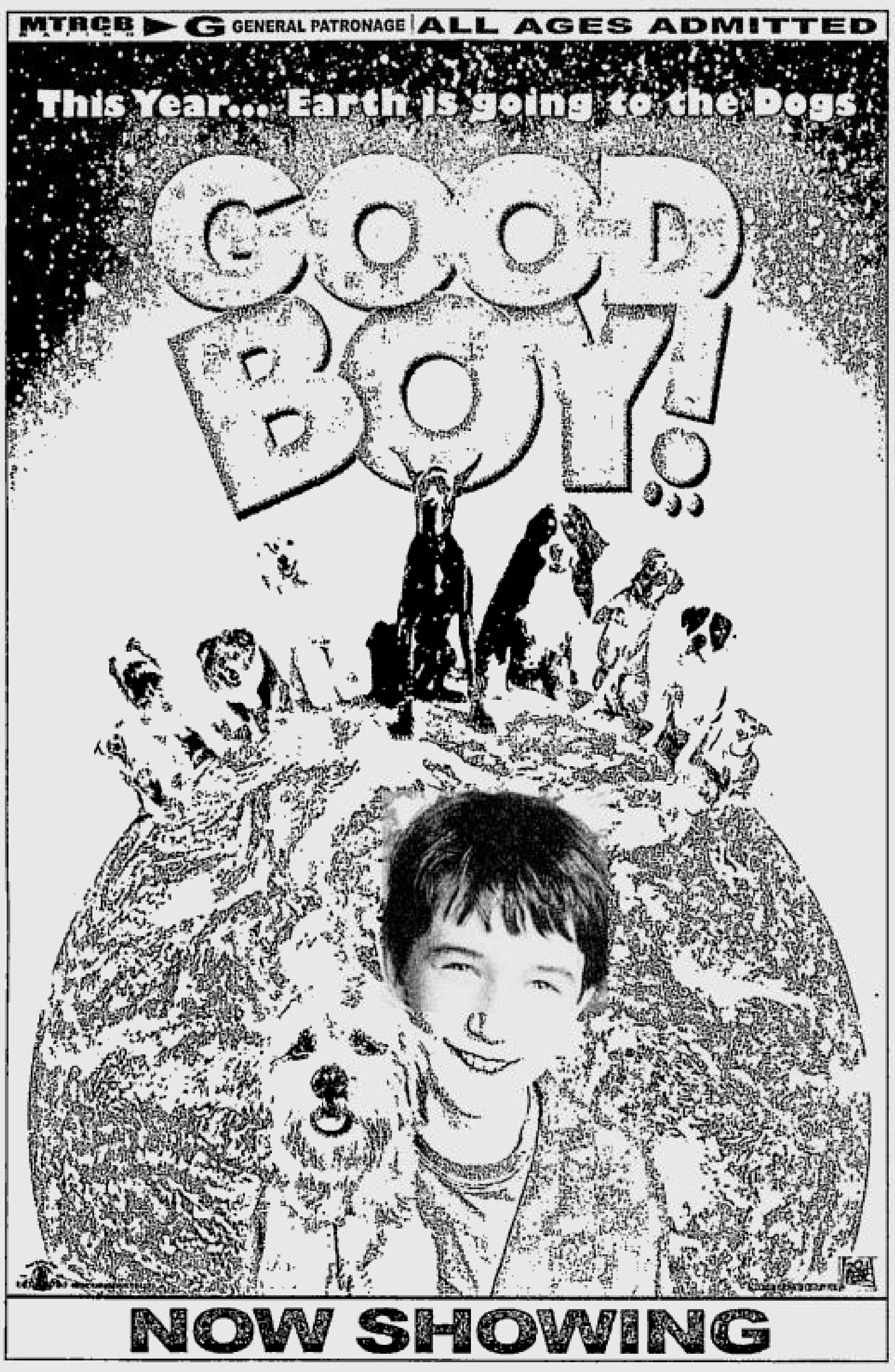
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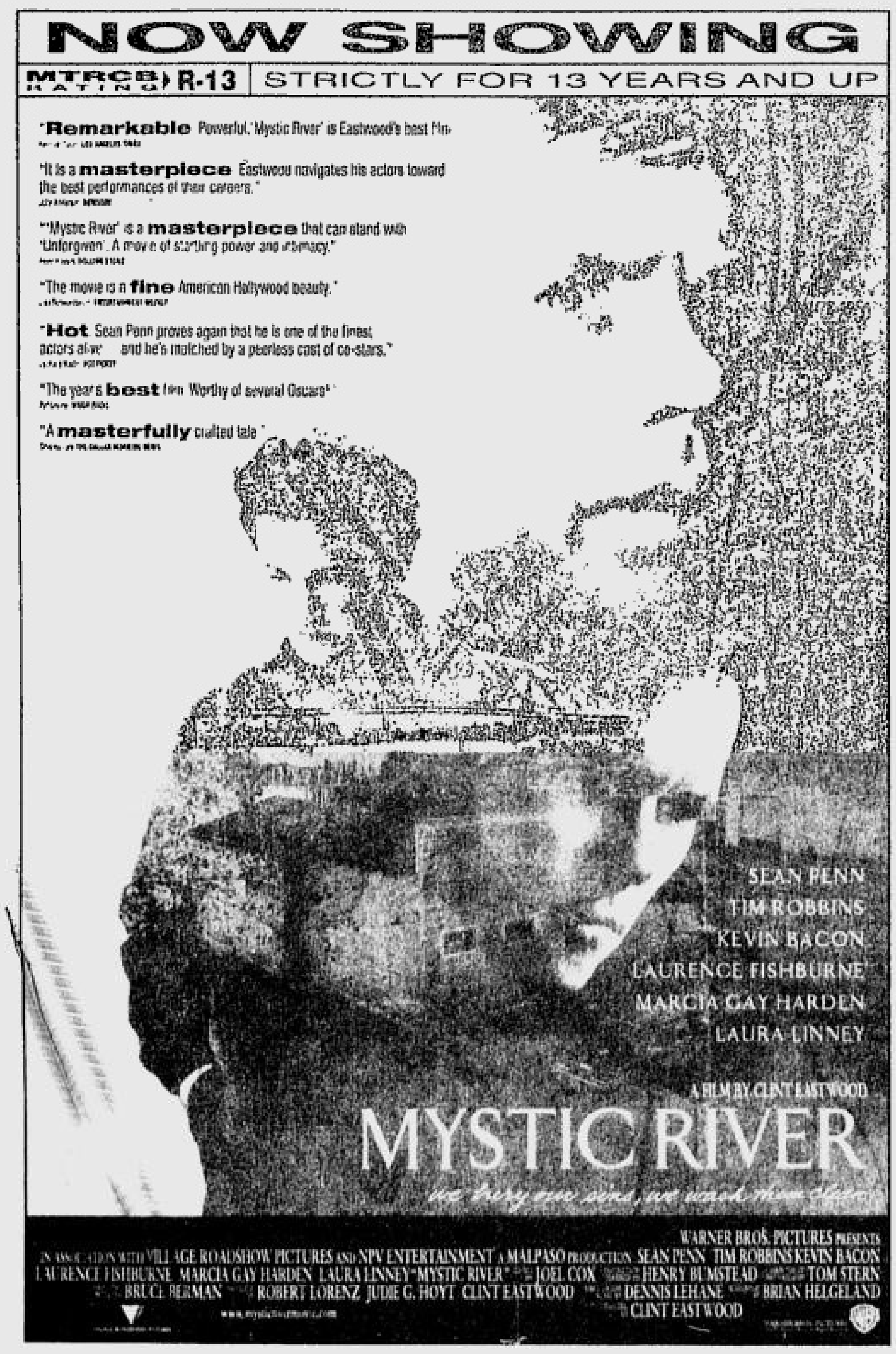
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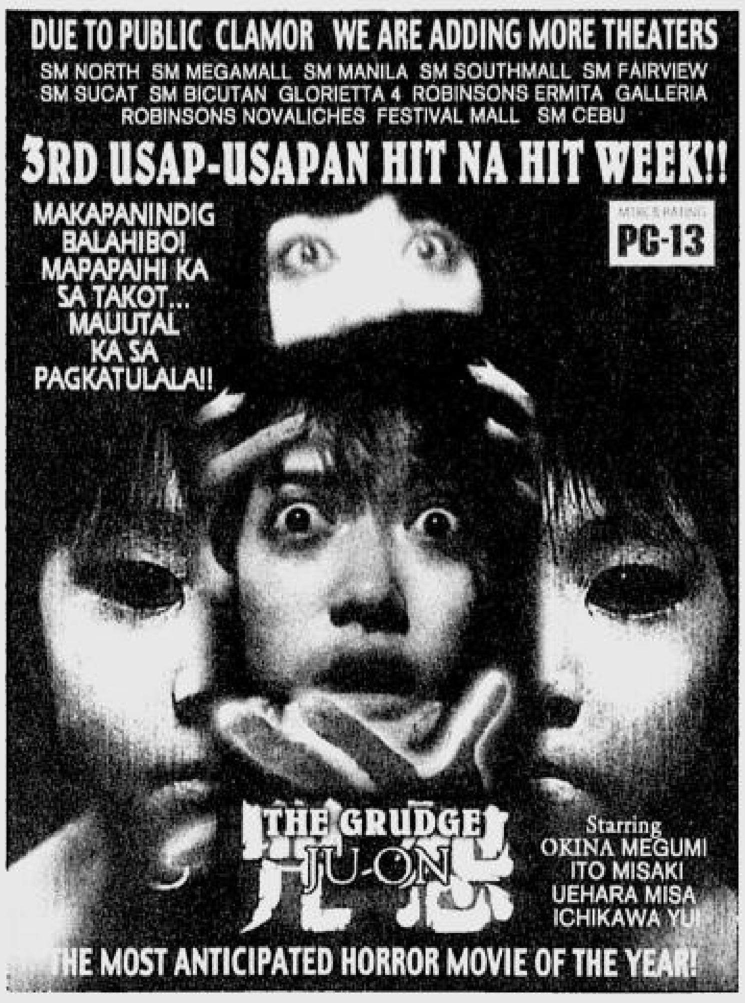
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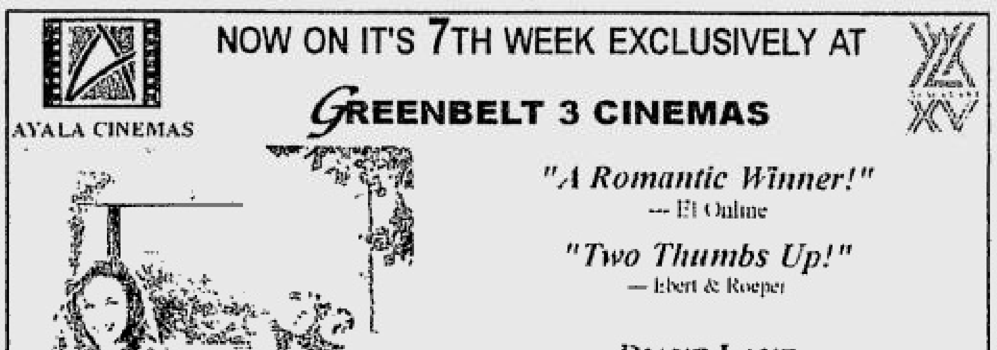
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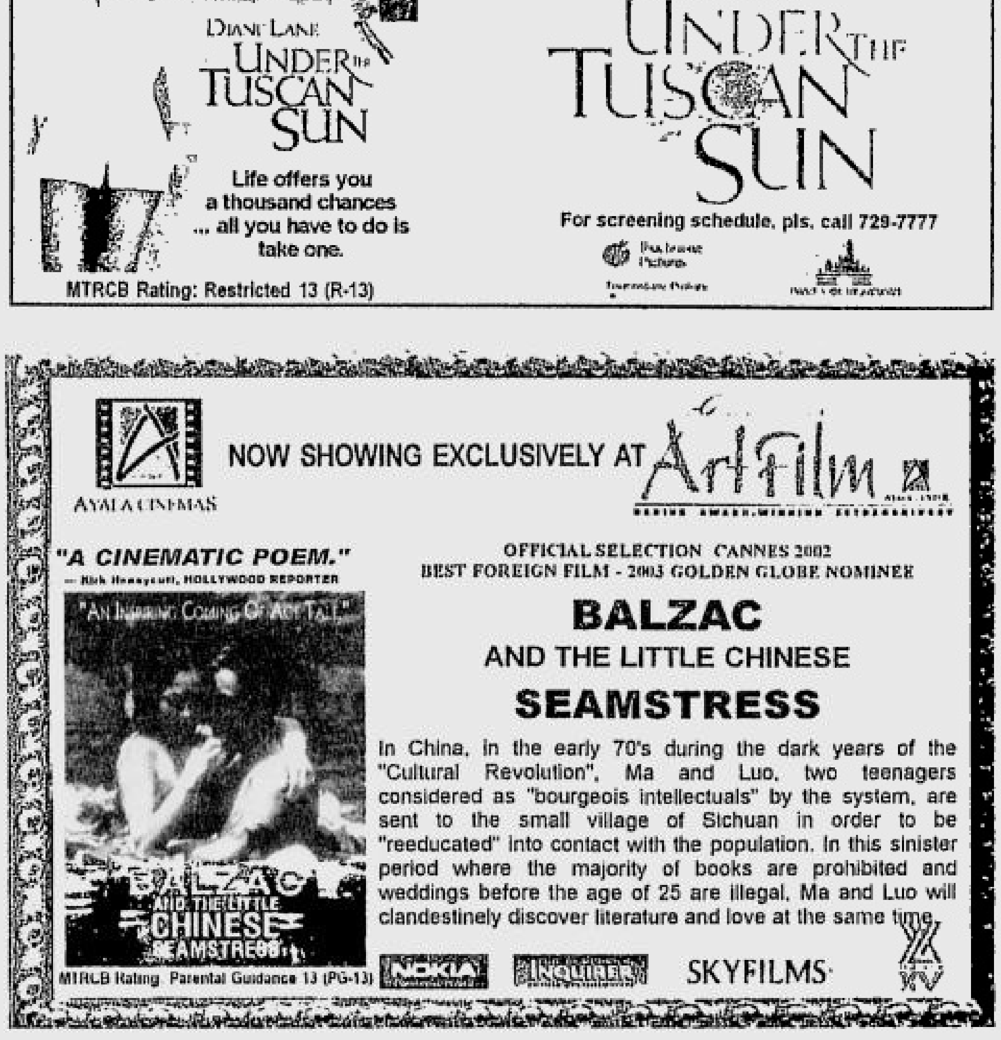
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In China, in the early 70's during the dark years of the "Cultural Revolution", Ma and Luo, two teenagers considered as "bourgeois intellectuals" by the system, are sent to the small village of Sichuan in order to be "reeducated" into contact with the population. In this sinister period where the majority of books are prohibited and weddings before the age of 25 are illegal, Ma and Luo will clandestinely discover literature and love at the same time.

Mostly overplayed tracks in new acoustic album

By Noelani Torre

(Conclusion)

THE TRACKS in "Almost Kinda Acoustic 2" that are really acoustic/live/unplugged are Craig David's "Fill Me In," The Corrs' "So Young," Sixpence None The Richer's "Kiss Me," Athenaeum's "What I Didn't Know" and Plumb's "Real."

Adlibbed lines

"Fill Me In" is one of the better tracks, a severely trimmed live version (just David and a guitar) that gives us a new take on an originally synth-laden song, and allows us to hear adlibbed lines we wouldn't ordinarily be privy to. The song's basic driving beat is highlighted as well, as is David's skill at rap.

"So Young" isn't as bare as "Fill Me In"—after all, The Corrs have to play an instrument each. Except for the audience's applause in some parts, however, this version is practically undistinguishable from the studio-recorded one.

Deviations

There's a bit of dialogue and applause in "Kiss Me" as well, but like "So Young" there's nothing much in this live version that is different from the original. Not that deviations are all that we're looking for, but there isn't much point in taking the trouble to locate an unplugged version of a song when the original will do just as well.

Acoustic/unplugged/live versions of songs are appealing for some because they're dressed-down takes of pieces that we know have mostly been engineered and produced to death.

People sometimes just want to hear the artist alone (wóe to those who depend on technical wizardry to sound good), and to see if they can get different impressions of frequently-played songs. Acoustic versions can sometimes be horrible-sounding, but that's not the case with "AKA."

What the collection suffers from is a uniform sound brought about by a seemingly indifferently chosen track listing. Compilations of this kind really ought to have a more varied selection, and the format already makes choosing fairly easy.

We hope that later collections will have a more diverse list and that they'll live up to the acoustic part of the title. We also hope that this frenzy for all things acoustic tapers off soon, because if we hear "Moonlight Over Paris" one more time, we just might—scream!

DAVID. Sings an unplugged version of "Fill Me In."

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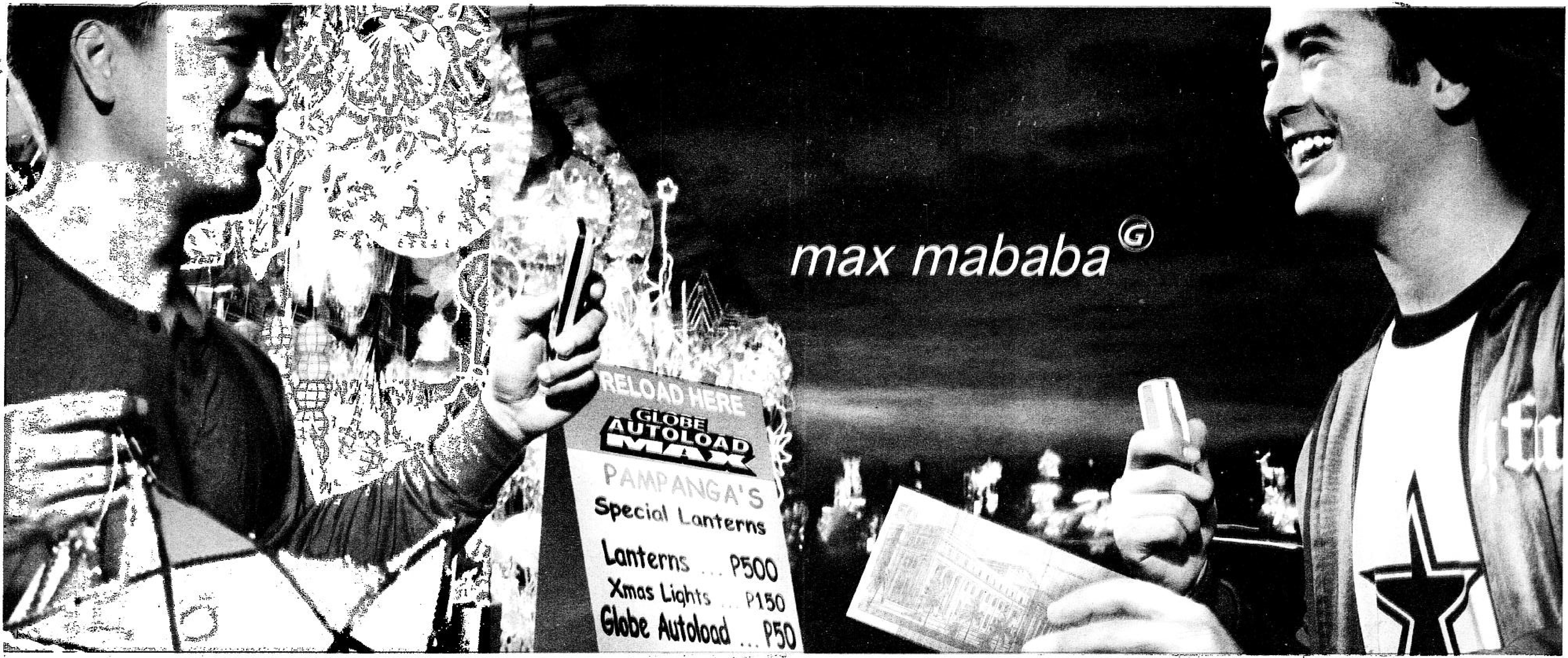
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How much do Broadway stars make?

NEW YORK—Compared to the millions they pay Tom, Julia or even Arnold, the new governor of California, Broadway salaries just aren't in the same show biz league.

Unattributed reports

Yet, those unattributed reports swirling through New York newspapers that Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick will each pull down a cool $100,000 a week to return to "The Producers" for a three-month stint could up the paychecks for those few performers who really can sell tickets on Broadway.

Can we talk specifics?

Well, no.

Getting actors or their agents or producers to talk about how much money stars make is a lot harder than getting them to talk about their sex lives or their drug and alcohol problems.

"No one will speak on the record," Adrian Bryan-Brown, a veteran New York press agent, admonished an intrepid reporter in search of exact figures on a star's (any star's) weekly paycheck.

He's right. Several producers were willing to talk, but only off the record and not for attribution. Several expressed doubts that Lane and Broderick will make that much.

Value

"I can't give you a primer," said "Chicago" producer Barry Weissler when asked how he determines what he pays stars to appear in his shows. "If Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones agreed to do 'Chicago' as Roxie and Billy Flynn, the value of those two people would be astronomical.

"If you are trying someone unknown and you don't know if it is going to work or not, something much less than that," Weissler added, artfully sidestepping an exact figure.

NATHAN Lane (left) and Matthew Broderick get impressive pay hikes to return to "The Producers."

If Arnold Schwarzenegger can make $30 million for the latest "Terminator" flick, and cast members of television's "Friends" each pull in $1 million an episode, what are eight performances a week in a Broadway show worth?

Let's start with the basics. According to the latest Actors' Equity figures, the minimum salary for a performer in a Broadway play or musical is $1,354 a week, and it goes up from there. How high depends on how good a performer's agent is or how many tickets a producer thinks a star can sell.

Lane and Broderick demonstrated during their year-long engagement in "The Producers," which opened in April 2001, that they could sell plenty.

It was the town's hottest ticket until the day they left, a fact not lost on the show's producers who are negotiating with the stars to return for three months, possibly in January.

Says Tom Viertel, one of the producers of "The Producers": "In this instance, obviously what we are trying to figure out is how much difference Nathan and Matthew would make to the show in the months involved, and try to apportion that value fairly among the show and the two stars."

And possibly raise ticket prices to pay them,

HOW/ G2

ZETA-JONES. Her fee would be astronomical if she performed onstage in "Chicago."

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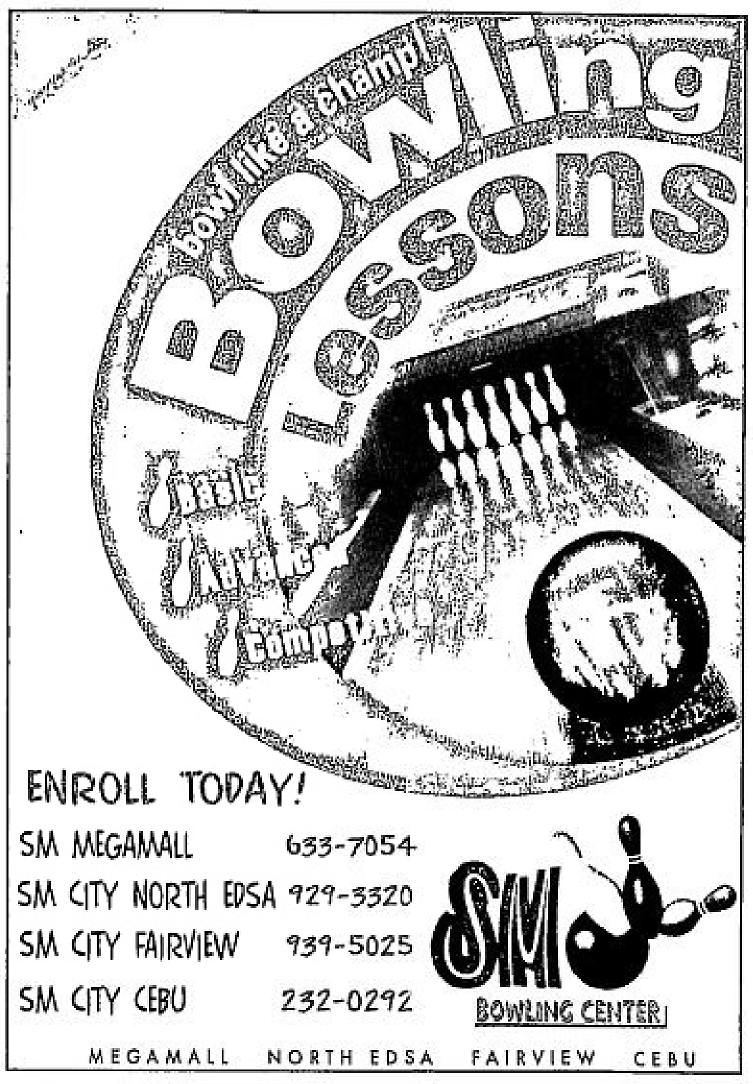

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Best wishes and advice for Julius and Tintin

By Nestor U. Torre

TINTIN and Julius with their celebrity *ninangs* and *ninongs*.

NELSON VILLARICA

THE WEDDING last Monday of Tintin Bersola and Julius Babao was unique in many ways. A particularly affecting and very Pinoy innovation was the inclusion of the personalized best wishes and advice for a good and lasting marriage from the couple's *ninongs* and *ninangs*.

Beautiful love story

Sharon Cuneta-Pangilinan led off with these thoughts: "I cannot tell you how proud I am to have been a part of your beautiful love story (it was on my show that you, Julius, gave Tin her engagement ring!). And now, here I am, a part of the rest of your lives as your *Ninang*. I really can't think of two people better suited to each other!

Panjee Lopez: "Marriage is a great teacher. Learn the lessons and live them well. Let truth illuminate your love and life always. On this, there is no compromise. My heartfelt wished for a fulfilling journey."

Charo Santos-Concio: "Keep the fire burning!"

Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan: "May you be blessed with many children so you can spread your beauty and intelligence to the world."

'Everything is possible'

Dong Puno: "As you go through life's trials—and there are quite a few for all of us—always rely on the love that binds you now to give you strength. Together, anything and everything is possible for you."

Dr. Rosalinda Hortaleza: "May your union be Christ-centered."

Cheche Lazaro: "Your romance is based on a genuine liking for each other. More than romance, I think this friendship is what will carry you all the way to your golden wedding anniversary. What a team!"

Rosalinda B. Ocampo: "I wish you a union blessed by God. Take good care of each other always."

Ang Kiu Kok: "Marriage is like a piece of art—more than the choice of subject, medium, color mix and brushstrokes, artists must have love and commitment. Art should also capture the heart and soul of the viewer, so it should exude warmth. Julius and Tintin, offer your artwork to God, and I am sure you will complete a masterpiece!"

Joven Cuanang: "You are soulmates, like the sun and moon complementing each other to make a day wonderful."

Baby Arenas: "I knew you were playing beautiful music together long before most people did (in 1998). I wish you a blissful life filled with bundles of joy!"

Jose Mari Chan: "Marriage is a journey, not a destination. It's about discovering and rediscovering each other in seemingly unending ways. That's what love is—constantly unfolding and enriching, never static. Powered by passion and romance, and strengthened by a solid bond of friendship and trust, it should bring out the best in you. Be each other's best friend!

Touching lives

"As you go on this journey, gather memories along the way—memories in the spring of your life to last you through the autumn of your years. Let love bear fruit in your children. Touch people's lives by the example of your love."

Bencab: "Just like brushstrokes on a canvas, love can take different twists and turns, colors and shapes. But, like a work of art, your love for each another will stand the rigors of time, and will remain a masterpiece forever."

Loren Legarda: "Dream new dreams—and reach new heights!"

Malang: "Art had a friend in Julius. Now, with their marriage, Art has two friends in Julius and Tintin. Life without God can produce a bitter, lonely and hopeless old age."

—Wise words not just for Julius and Tintin, but for everyone in love—and out!

Film buffs extol their favorite actors

By Behn Cervantes

GERE. Great sex appeal.

RECENTLY, I asked some people which actors impressed them most. Ronnie Amuyot quickly said, "Robin Padilla." Why Robin? "Because he is a bad boy!" So? "Because *I'm* a bad boy!"

Catharsis

I knew there was more to that seemingly smart-aleck reply. It must have something to do with catharsis and all the Greek jazz, I figured out.

As far as foreign actors are concerned, Ronnie likes Denzel Washington for his versatility.

Eva Elona, was quick to agree, but I suspect she was more interested in Denzel's great body and near-perfect face.

Sex appeal

Elona said she was also taken by the sex appeal of Richard Gere in "Pretty Woman," Robert Redford in "Indecent Proposal" and Denzel Washington in "Bone Collector."

Ogie Juliano cannot single out a local actor because he believes most of them are inconsistent. If he had to name one, he would have chosen the late Rita Gomez.

Elan

He also appreciates the class, elan and style of Patrick Stewart, no matter if the Shakespearean-trained actor is best known for "Star Trek" and deals more with stellar problems than human conflict. He also likes Tom Cruise because he's handsome and a fine actor who is unafraid of challenges.

He referred especially to Oliver Stone's "Born on the 4th of July," where Cruise lost weight to portray the war-traumatized veteran well enough to merit an Academy Award nomination.

Amiel Leonardia prefers vintage actors like Spencer Tracy, Paul Muni and Fredrich March. He especially has fond memories of the Tracy-March acting "duel" in "Inherit the Wind." Joonee Gamboa agrees.

Easy style

For my part I have been particularly impressed of late by Morgan Freeman, whose race never comes into consideration when he is acting. He becomes the character first and foremost, who just happens to be black. I love his easy style, his intensity and conviction!

Critics' group puts film awards back on schedule

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles Film Critics Association has revived its annual movie awards because of a court decision allowing studios to resume sending special video copies of films to voters.

10 days

The Los Angeles critics probably will announce their picks for best picture, actor, actress and other honors within 10 days to two weeks, Jean Oppenheimer, the group's president, said Tuesday.

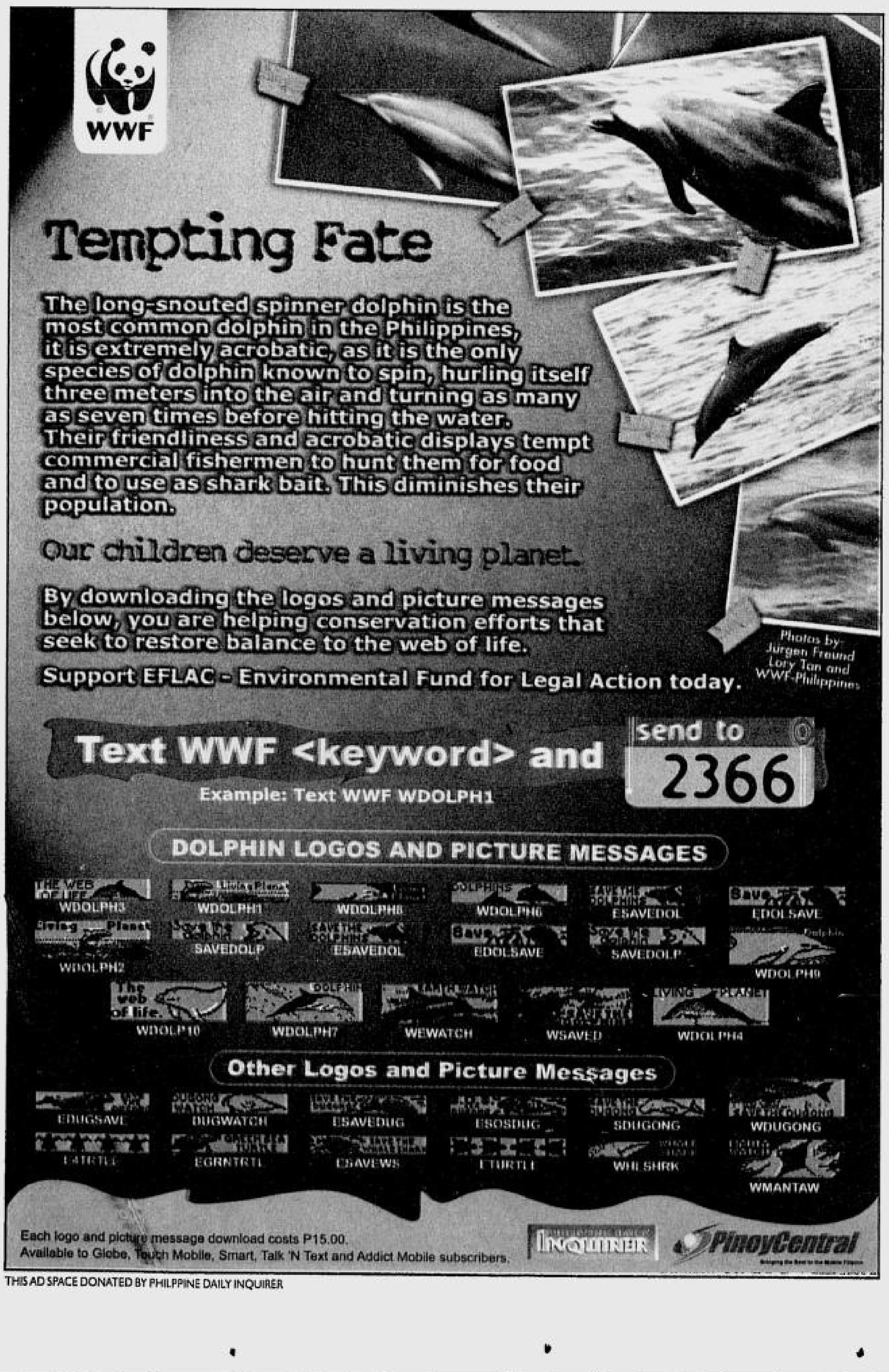
The group had called off its honors after top studios and their trade group, the Motion Picture Association of America, banned DVDs and videotapes. The MPAA said movie bootleggers have obtained copies of those screeners and used them to make pirated copies.

The studios and the MPAA later partly lifted the ban, allowing videotapes of competing films to be sent to Academy Awards voters but not to other awards groups.

Temporary injunction

A federal judge last week granted a temporary injunction that lifted the screener ban.

Since that court ruling, members of the Los Angeles critics group have begun receiving a trickle of awards screeners, which help them sort through the rush of Oscar contenders that come at the end of each year, Oppenheimer said. *AP*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Maricel isn't 'mataray,' says sister

By Jocelyn Valle

SORIANO. Loves watching action films.

MARICEL Soriano gives 100 percent of herself to her work, but the Diamond Star points out that the closeness of her personality to the characters she portrays onscreen is zero. "They're just roles that I have to play," she points out. "That's why you have to read and study the script."

Closest character

Maricel's older sister Bec-Bec (the eldest in the brood of seven) agrees. "*Siguro*, the closest character would be Mary in 'Bida si Mister, Bida si Misis,'" she offers, referring to the actress' sitcom with Cesar Montano. "*Pero 'di ganoon kaingay*."

Bec-Bec describes Maricel as hardworking ("She loves her work") and outspoken ("*Kung meron s'yang gustong iparating sa amin, 'di n'ya sinu*-suppress"). She's also a good daughter, sister and mother (to Tien, 11, and Marron, who turns 17 on Dec. 19, and studies at Oakridge Military School in the US).

The versatile actress is also a homebody. "*Siguro, kasi pagod na s'ya sa kalalabas*," Bec-Bec explains with a chuckle. She often catches her famous sister at home watching movies on DVD. "She has a collection of her past movies. But she often watches Bram Stoker's 'Dracula.'"

Versatile actress

Bec-Bec, who's also the mother of young actress Meryl Soriano, singles out "Dinampot Ka Lang sa Lupa" and "Soltera" as her favorites among the actress' numerous cinematic works. She also looks forward to Maricel's latest Metro filmfest participation, Viva Films' "Filipinas," as the eldest child Yolanda who is forced to stay home to care for her ailing mother.

Last year, Maricel was in the first "Mano Po." Maricel admits, though, that it took her years to learn not to take her character home.

In her 33 years in the biz (she turns 39 on Feb. 25), Maricel shares she never went to acting schools.

Relaxed

She improves her craft by watching movies. "*Taliwas itong sasabihin ko sa 'yo, pero* I love action films," she intones. "Tommy Lee Jones is one of my favorite actors. *Kadalasan, lalaking artista ang gusto ko.* They're so relaxed onscreen. They make you feel that what they're doing is easy. Actually, it's not."

Bec-Bec nods, "She likes action and horror movies. The irony is, she's good at comedy, but she's not fond of watching comedies. *Pero 'yung* sense of humor *niya, ganyan talaga. Kapag magkasama kami, bigla s'yang magpa*-punch line." That's why Maricel doesn't understand why people have this perception of her as being *mataray*.

How much do Broadway . . .

From page G1

although Viertel said, "We haven't really considered that in any great detail."

The day the ecstatic reviews for "The Producers" came out two years ago, top ticket prices were hiked to $100. Later, selected seats were made available—and still are—through Broadway Inner Circle, a premium ticket agency, for $480 and $240.

In the recent past, there have been reports of stars getting between $30,000 and $35,000 a week. Among those rumored to be in that category are Bernadette Peters and Vanessa Williams, who recently starred in a revival of "Into the Woods."

But then, you want a star, you pay more—unless you are Joanne Woodward and can get your husband, Paul Newman, to work for scale in a revival of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," produced by a theater you run.

Broadway is filled with the ghosts of star-driven shows that thrived for a while, only to fade when their big names left.

Of course, if a show does not have big stars, it can still make money. One reason why "Cats" and "Les Miserables" had such long runs is because they did not have to pay the hefty salaries that stars command. And "The Phantom of the Opera" is still running on Broadway, long after original star Michael Crawford's departure. *AP*

First Christmas celebrations remembered

By Behn Cervantes

"WE were very poor. My father, a Baptist minister, died during the war, so my widowed mother, a public school teacher, had to fend for me. You can imagine how hard-up we were! We would go over to her younger sister's home for Christmas. She wasn't rich either, but she lived in an ancestral home.

Yuletide spirit

"Not having much in material terms, we focused on the true meaning of Christmas—and the yuletide spirit!"

Those were Amiel Leonardia's first impressions of Christmas as a boy in Iloilo City.

Things changed when they lived with an uncle who was better off than his aunt. "It was the first time we had ham, *queso de bola*, grapes, apples and other goodies I used to long for during the more difficult years," Amiel smiles.

LEONARDIA. Focused on the true meaning of the holiday season.

Jay-Ar Igno from Dolores, Quezon remembers his mother and brothers during the holidays. His father worked abroad, so they had to content themselves with the Christmas cards he sent from Saudi Arabia. The song, "The Perfect Christmas," brings all those memories back and holds great meaning for him to this day.

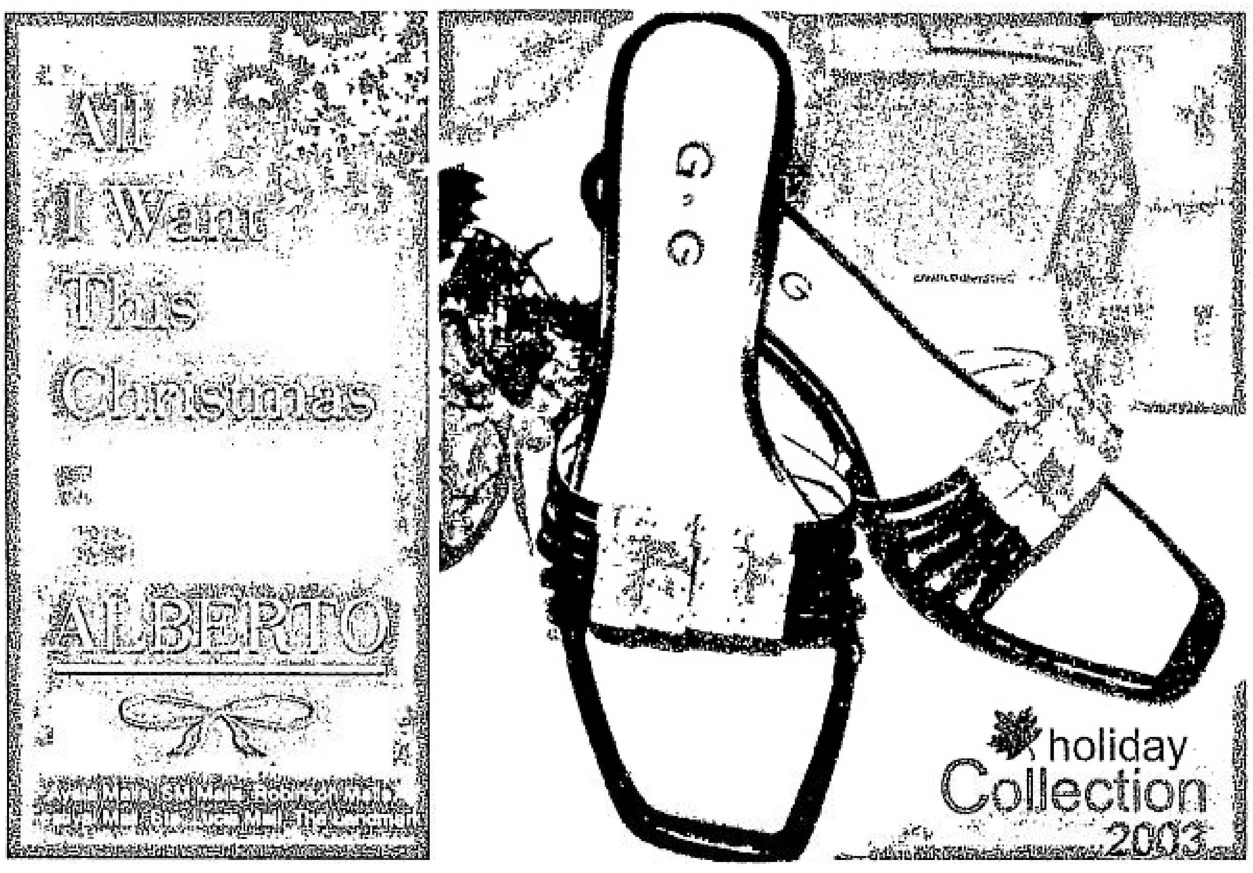
Ken Jamandre remembers his first Christmas in Iloilo City as the time he was not able to get a particular gift he wanted because "it wouldn't fit in the Christmas stocking." He was so disappointed because he really wanted a bicycle! Instead, he got a match box car.

Difficult times

Eva Sexon has desired only one thing each Christmas: She hopes that her family's future will be secure despite the increasingly difficult times. When asked to state what material thing she most wants, she says, "Money!"

Then, she decides that it is really a house and lot that she wants more than anything else. That way, her family will be secure, and Christmas will have greater meaning because it would be founded on the true essence of the Yuletide holidays—family unity and love.

For my part, I want peace on earth to men of goodwill. But that will have to be selective, to include only those who do good for their neighbors and their families—like the good shepherds who worshipped the babe in the manger, the Redeemer and source of everlasting love!



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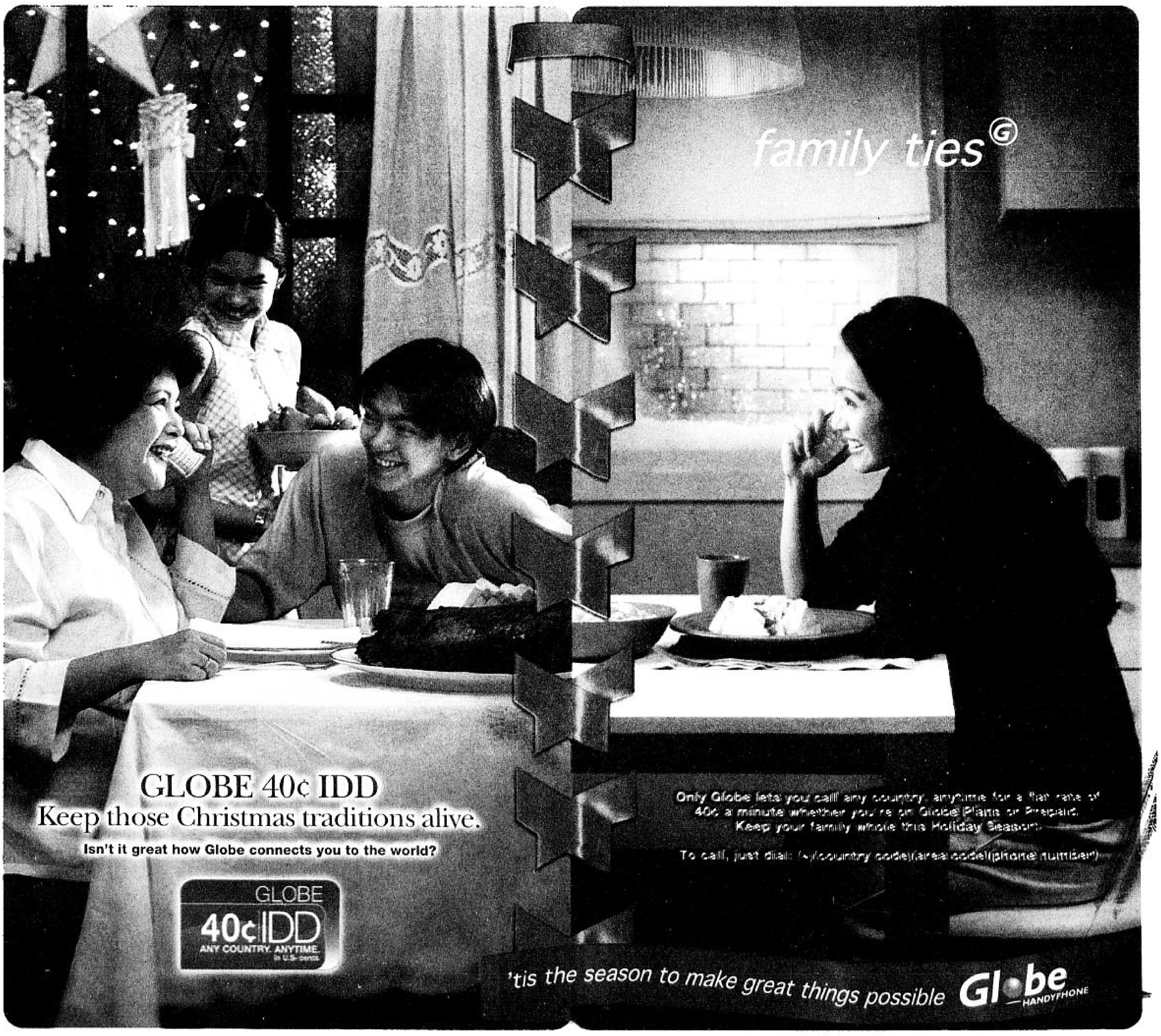
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Crooning Christmas carols with Connick and Bublé

By Rito P. Asilo

AFTER years of seeing rap and hip-hop artists lording it over the pop charts, we are pleased to note the resurgence of smooth-voiced singers in the recording industry.

The past two years, we saw the debut releases of Michael Bublé, Josh Groban and the like. For the last 10 years, though, Harry Connick Jr. has successfully crossed musical genres to win top slots on the pop charts.

Holiday season

This holiday season, fans of Bublé and Connick have something to be happy about—their Christmas albums have been released in the local market.

Michael Bublé's "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!" collection may feature only five holiday favorites, but every song in the album is exquisitely produced. He lends his distinctive vibrant style and classic crooning to each of them.

CONNICK. Successfully crossed musical genres.

BUBLÉ. Fuller, standard-style warbling.

Youthful zest

The title track is the most upbeat of the lot, and Bublé makes the toe-thumping song cackle with youthful zest. For his young age, you can't help but be in awe of the crooner's mastery and control of his vocal instrument. He growls one minute and glides to a whisper the next, a style that infuses his songs with sensitivity and technical dynamics uncommon among pop singers these days.

A most recorded contemporary Christmas tune, David Foster's "Grown-Up Christmas List," about every man's hopes for a better future for humanity, takes a sweeter, more honest rendering in Bublé's interpretation.

"I'll Be Home for Christmas" becomes more personal with the inclusion of a musical prelude. Mel Torme's "The Christmas Song" and Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" also take on a deeper meaning with Bublé's swooning vocal arrangement.

16-song set

On the other hand, Harry Connick Jr.'s second Christmas compilation, "Harry For The Holidays," contains a hefty 16-song set that includes jazz-tinged arrangements of holiday classics (the fun-filled "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," "The Christmas Waltz" and "Frosty, The Snow Man"), as well as delightful, self-penned songs (the infectious "The Happy Elf," the meditative "I Come With Love," and his duet with George Jones, "Nothin' New For New Year").

Remarkable, too, is Connick's new arrangement of the jazzy tune, "This Christmas."

The album also includes a moody, wistful version of Eden Ahbez' "Nature Boy." (Remember "The greatest thing you'll ever learn/ Is just to love and be loved in return"—from "Moulin Rouge"?).

Vocal quality

Of course, after listening to the two Sinatra sound-a-likes one after the other, you notice the differences in vocal quality: While Bublé croons his way in standard-style warbling with a vocal register fuller than Connick's, Harry's voice possesses a definite quality, courtesy of his New Orleans jazz vocal lilt.

Regardless of which singing star you prefer, you'll have a grand time listening to young male singers who top the charts, not only because of the slick production packaging of their respective albums, but mainly because of their pure, beautiful voices.

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Uneven performances noted among theater talents

By Nestor U. Torre

WE'RE currently rehearsing several stage productions with some promising new talents. It's both exciting and draining to work with them, because some of them are so raw, while others have acquired some bad performing habits that need to be eliminated before they can come up with really natural and affecting characterizations.

Professional

The uneven level of performances on the local scene is the result of the fact that we don't really have professional theater in this country.

While a few people earn their living from theater, most others have to work at daytime jobs, so they can rehearse and perform only on weeknights and weekends.

This makes it difficult for them to think of theater work as their profession, hence the less-than-professional standards of theater here.

In addition, many new talents are attracted to theater for the wrong reasons. If they're goodlooking and can sing, they think that straight and musical theater will provide a glamorous showcase for their physical attributes, and don't work hard at the more internal and psychological aspects of performance.

Messy standards

They also tend to confuse theater with show business. Local show biz has messy standards, which some talents feel they can carry over to theater, not realizing that these two fields are radically different from each other.

Thus, they come to rehearsals late, do slipshod work, make *lagare* between several productions at the same time, and are content with rushed, lazy work. They don't realize that theater is an artistic rather than crowd-pleasing endeavor that does much more than just divert the audience.

It is supposed to vivify and synthesize the whole range of human experience, and to arrive at insights that can make a significant difference in viewers' attitudes about life.

This infinitely greater goal requires mindsets and skills that are much more rigorous and versatile than what show business needs.

So, show business types who enter the theater world are quickly found wanting, or pollute and drag down the artistic environment with their unenlightened attitudes and lazy ways.

To become an excellent theater worker, a new talent must learn to think, not of glorifying himself, but of being at the service of the play's material, and of its audience.

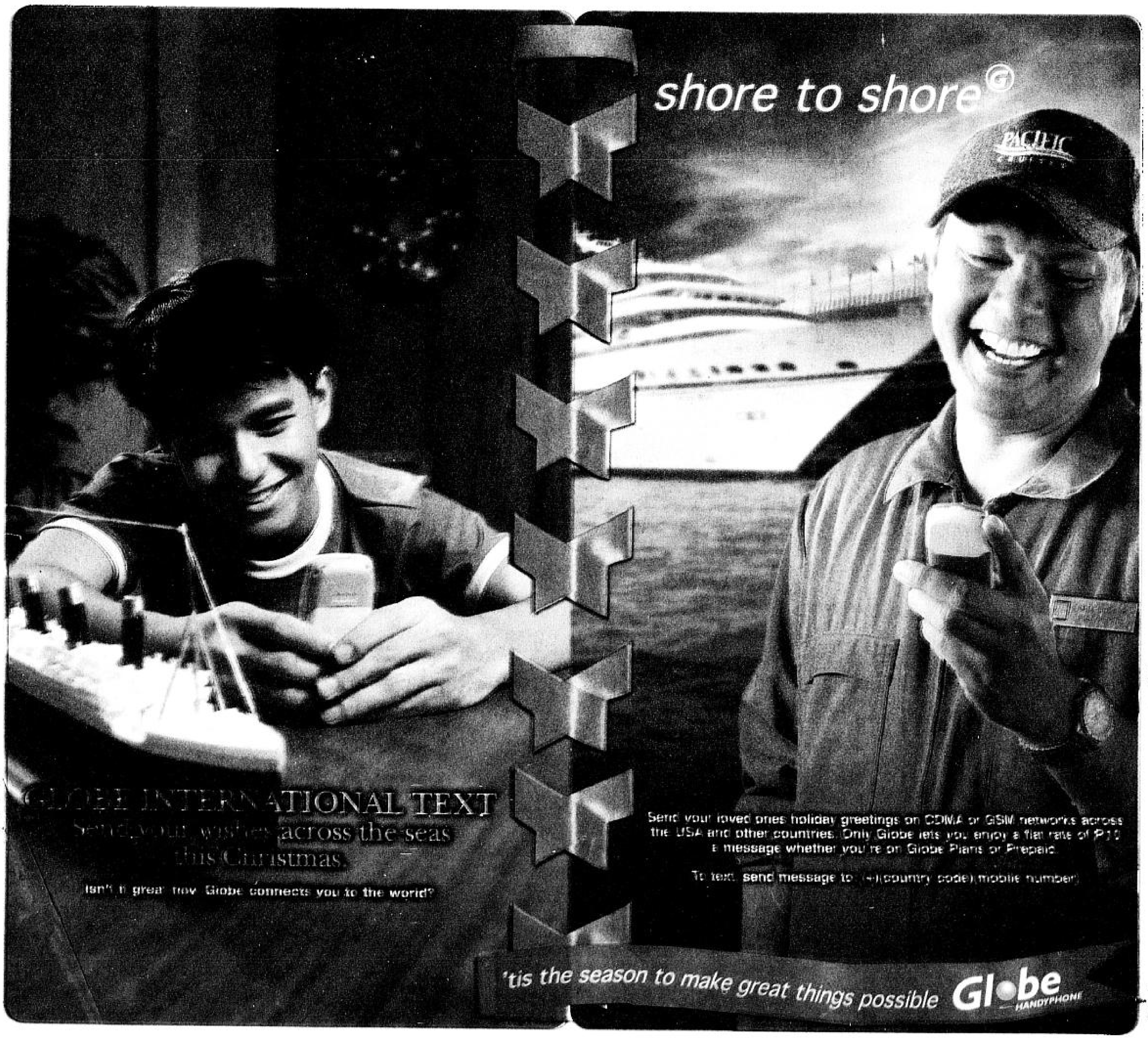
Multiplicity of ills

This "giving" attitude can cure a multiplicity of ills, because the performer would have the right focus in his work, and his grateful audience will love him for it.

If a new talent really wants to be a professional theater worker, he must develop all of his skills, and this takes time, effort and commitment.

To be able to do this, he needs to prioritize his theater activities in relation to his other interests and needs. He needs to make money to support himself, but a full-time job would restrict him too much.

So, some theater people augment the money they make from theater with part-time work that allows them to make their schedule flexible, or start their own small business, which makes for even greater flexibility. This takes imagination and a sense of sacrifice, but for young theater talents who really want to develop their artistic skills, it's worth it!



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SATURDAY *Special*

CULKIN (right) with Seth Green in "Party Monster." He wouldn't trade his childhood experiences for anything in the world.

AP

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MACAULAY CULKIN

No regrets about quick rise to fame

NEW YORK—Macaulay Culkin says he has no regrets about rising to fame at a young age as the star of the "Home Alone" movies.

During his early teens, Culkin publicly endured his parents' bitter custody battle over him and his siblings. In 1998, he married actress Rachel Miner when both were just 17; they separated two years later.

Interview

"I wouldn't trade any of my experiences for anything in the world," Culkin, now 23, recently told Barbara Walters in an interview on the ABC television program, "20/20."

"I'm very happy with who I am, and where I've ended up, and I wouldn't change one thing," he said. "Because if you change one thing in the past, everything else is different."

Culkin, who stars as New York club kid Michael Alig in the new movie, "Party Monster," denied rumors that he plans to marry his girlfriend, actress Mila Kunis from the Fox sitcom, "That '70s Show."

"Oh, no, we're not engaged," he said. *AP*

Paul McCartney's animated films to be released

NEW YORK—Hollywood's Miramax studios recently announced that it was teaming up with Paul McCartney to release three animated stories produced by the former Beatle.

The stories, "Tropical Island Hum," "Tuesday" and "Rupert and the Frog Song" are scheduled for release on DVD and video in spring of next year, Miramax chairman Harvey Weinstein said in a statement.

McCartney and Weinstein most recently collaborated on "The Concert for New York City," which raised $35 million for the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Musical genius

"While the world knows Paul as a musical genius, he is also a master of animation, and I'm thrilled to be working with him again," said Weinstein.

"Rupert and the Frog Song" dates back to 1984 and includes the McCartney-scored song, "We All Stand Together," which became a major worldwide hit.

McCartney worked with longtime collaborator Geoff Dunbar to create additional special effects in order to enhance the animation on the three shorts.

In addition, newly recorded live-action footage—featuring McCartney himself—will be included in the Miramax release.

McCartney's connections with animation began in the 1960s with the Beatles TV series which, in turn, led to the full-length feature, "Yellow Submarine." *AFP*

MCCARTNEY. His connections with animation began in the '60s.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Sony Ericsson
Season's Greetings!
NOKIA
Feliz Navidad!
NOKIA
Don't forget my gift ;-)

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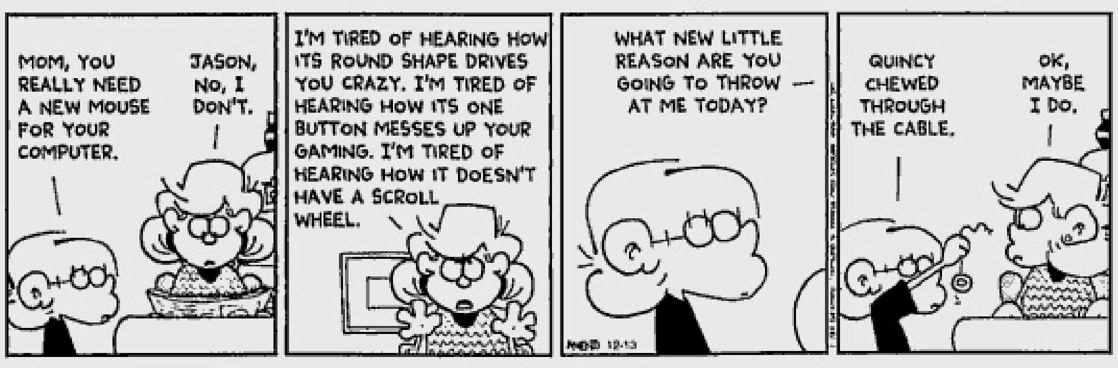
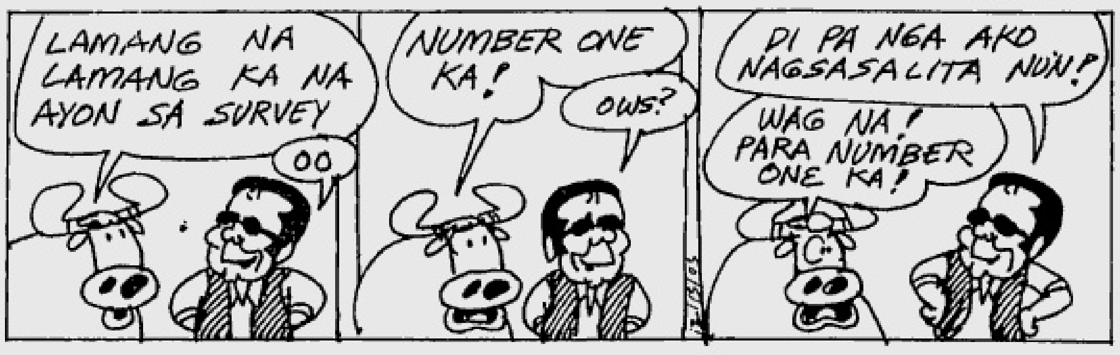
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


MOM, YOU REALLY NEED A NEW MOUSE FOR YOUR COMPUTER.
JASON, NO, I DON'T.
I'M TIRED OF HEARING HOW ITS ROUND SHAPE DRIVES YOU CRAZY. I'M TIRED OF HEARING HOW ITS ONE BUTTON MESSES UP YOUR GAMING. I'M TIRED OF HEARING HOW IT DOESN'T HAVE A SCROLL WHEEL.
WHAT NEW LITTLE REASON ARE YOU GOING TO THROW — AT ME TODAY?
QUINCY CHEWED THROUGH THE CABLE.
OK, MAYBE I DO.
AMEND 12-13

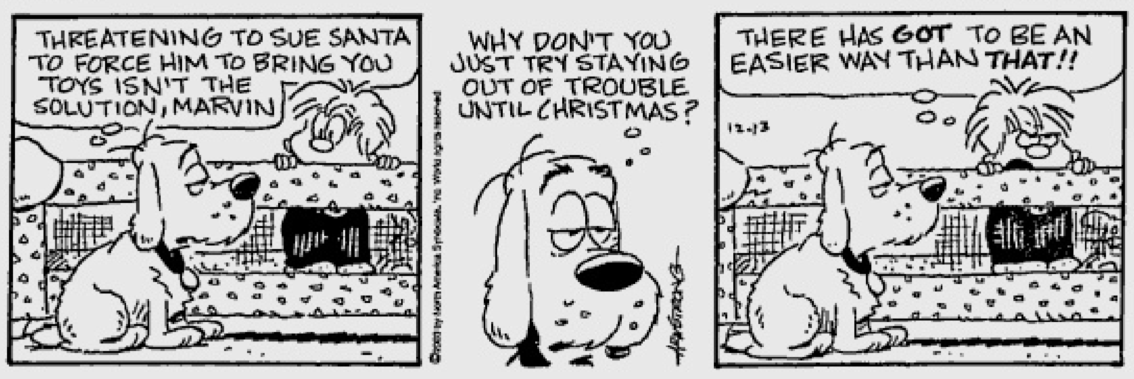
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


LAMANG NA LAMANG KA NA AYON SA SURVEY
OO
NUMBER ONE KA!
OWS?
DI PA NGA AKO NAGSASALITA NÚN!?
WAG NA! PARA NUMBER ONE KA!

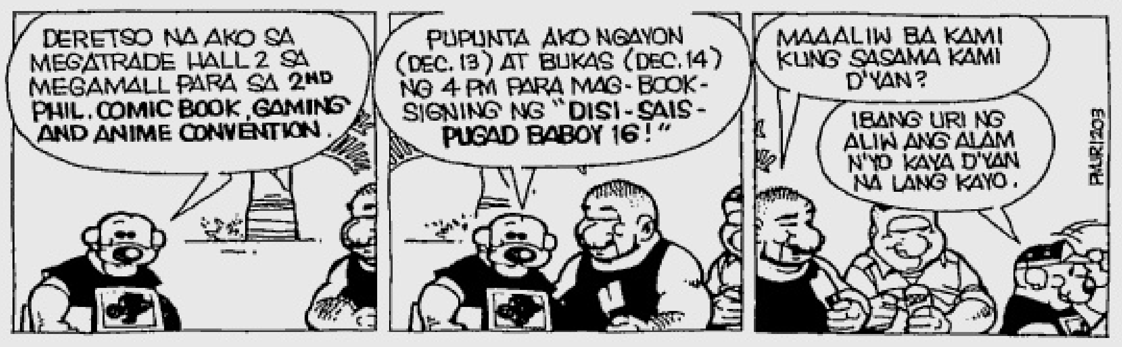
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THREATENING TO SUE SANTA TO FORCE HIM TO BRING YOU TOYS ISN'T THE SOLUTION, MARVIN
WHY DON'T YOU JUST TRY STAYING OUT OF TROUBLE UNTIL CHRISTMAS?
THERE HAS GOT TO BE AN EASIER WAY THAN THAT!!
12-13

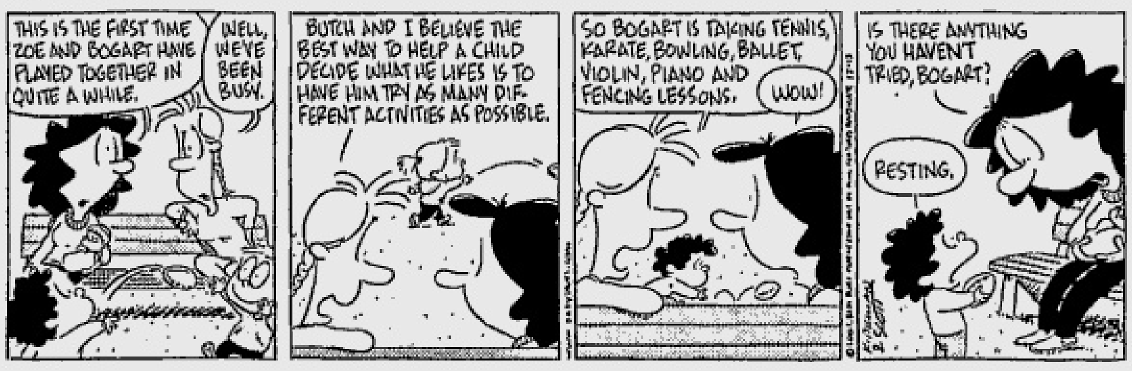
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DERETSO NA AKO SA MEGATRADE HALL 2 SA MEGAMALL PARA SA 2ND PHIL. COMIC BOOK, GAMING AND ANIME CONVENTION.
PUPUNTA AKO NGAYON (DEC. 13) AT BUKAS (DEC. 14) NG 4 PM PARA MAG-BOOK-SIGNING NG "DISI-SAIS-PUGAD BABOY 16!"
MAAALIW BA KAMI KUNG SASAMA KAMI D'YAN?
IBANG URI NG ALIW ANG ALAM N'YO KAYA D'YAN NA LANG KAYO.
PAUR 1203

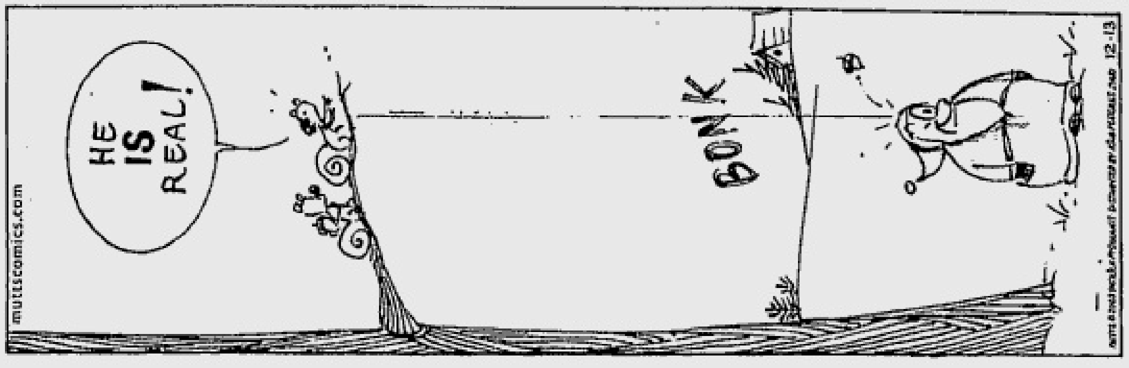
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ZOE AND BOGART HAVE PLAYED TOGETHER IN QUITE A WHILE.
WELL, WE'VE BEEN BUSY.
BUTCH AND I BELIEVE THE BEST WAY TO HELP A CHILD DECIDE WHAT HE LIKES IS TO HAVE HIM TRY AS MANY DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES AS POSSIBLE.
SO BOGART IS TAKING TENNIS, KARATE, BOWLING, BALLET, VIOLIN, PIANO AND FENCING LESSONS.
WOW!
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU HAVEN'T TRIED, BOGART?
RESTING.

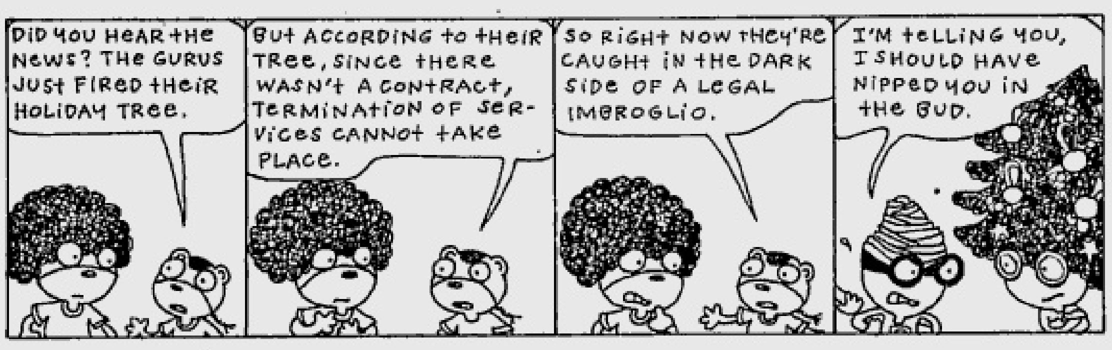
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HE IS REAL!
BONK
12-13
muttscomics.com

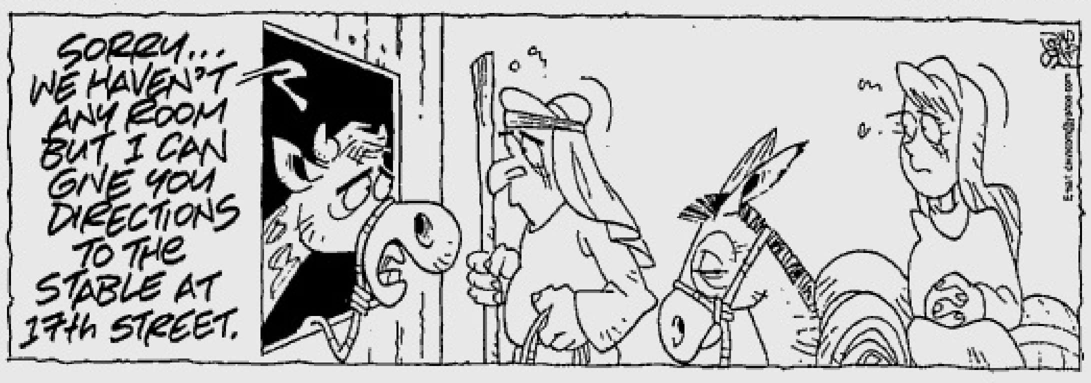
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS? THE GURUS JUST FIRED THEIR HOLIDAY TREE.
BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR TREE, SINCE THERE WASN'T A CONTRACT, TERMINATION OF SERVICES CANNOT TAKE PLACE.
SO RIGHT NOW THEY'RE CAUGHT IN THE DARK SIDE OF A LEGAL IMBROGLIO.
I'M TELLING YOU, I SHOULD HAVE NIPPED YOU IN THE BUD.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SORRY... WE HAVEN'T ANY ROOM BUT I CAN GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS TO THE STABLE AT 17th STREET.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have an excellent sense of timing, which allows you to deliver a line well. You work and plan for the future. Therefore, today's efforts are always with tomorrow in mind. You find the human condition fascinating, and you are an excellent judge of character. Work hard in the next year for rewards in 2005. **Birthdate of:** Jamie Foxx, actor; Dick Van Dyke, actor; Wendie Malick, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): If you feel the need for advice, seek out someone older or more experienced. This person should be someone you respect, because you want serious guidance today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Teachings of gurus, ministers, priests, philosophers and professors intrigue you now. You feel quite serious about wanting to learn something new that's important to you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Mild angst about your old age and who will take care of you in the future flits through your mind today. You're concerned with wanting to feel safe about your waning years.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Discussions with partners and close friends are extremely practical today. Nevertheless, you could feel isolated and lonely. Count your blessings, and switch to positive thoughts.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You'll probably double-check everything at work today, because you're afraid of making a mistake. It could be the nature of the job, or it could be because someone is hovering over your shoulder. (Gulp.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Feelings of guilt or a sense of practical duty make you cancel fun, frivolous plans today. It seems to be the thing to do. Why not reschedule for tomorrow?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're completely wrapped up in practical issues related to family and home. Today is not your concern—tomorrow is.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): It's easy to worry too much right now. You feel that no matter what you try or which direction you go, you're blocked. It's true right now. But this condition will change soon.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might feel broke today. You certainly feel you don't have the means or the money that you wish you had. It's just a passing dark cloud on your horizon.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might have to say good-bye to a loved one or separate from a relationship at this time. It's just the way the cookie crumbles.

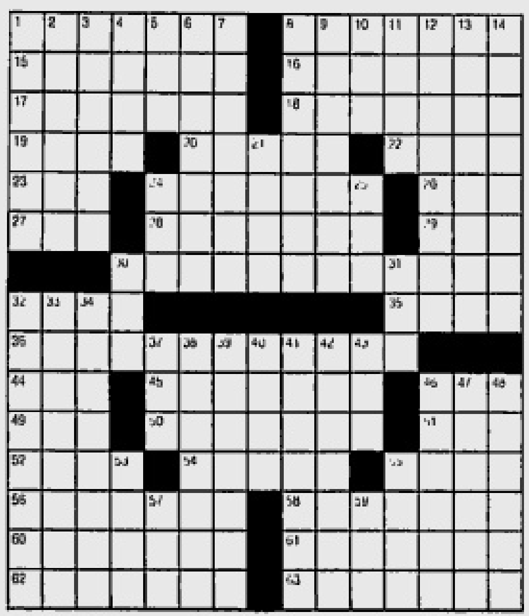
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can accomplish a lot at work today, especially heavy mental work that requires a lot of discipline and an eye for detail. Make sure you take some breaks.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have a sharp and critical eye that can accomplish a lot with creativity, the arts, working with children and planning related to the hospitality industry.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Pace increases
8 Bridge bid challenger
15 Emancipate
16 Inscribe RIP
17 Replicate
18 Stays in line
19 Straggles
20 Declares positively
22 Lady's guy
23 Blighted tree
24 Mimicries
26 Final degree
27 Crime-busters' grp.
28 Actress Beverly
29 Pair
30 Releases a safety valve
32 Zorro's wrap
35 Perry's penner
36 Without warning
44 Sandhurst sch.
45 Jacks or better, e.g.
46 Blasting letters
49 Wray of "King Kong"
50 Traveler's guide
51 __ de la Plata
52 Water in Andalusia
54 Raptor's dive
55 Printer's measure
56 Gorged
58 Outmoded e-mail
60 Getty of "The Golden Girls"
61 O. Henry, e.g.
62 Maintained a supply of
63 Ugly ducklings?



By Ed Voile
Gillette, WY

12/13/03

DOWN

1 Flashed one's pearly whites
2 Mexican menu item
3 Mystery
4 Places
5 Thurman of "The Truth about Cats & Dogs"
6 Series of quick, light steps
7 Cat or Ray
8 Interrogate after a mission
9 Person in question
10 Vocalized grunt
11 Promote oneself
12 Purple shade
13 Ultimate
14 "Cocoon" setting
21 Hence
24 Fruity concoction
25 Distress letters
30 Sayer or McKern
31 Sundial X
32 Taxi costs
33 Ptolemy's treatise
34 Try to curry favor with
37 __ crying out loud!
38 Peter or Paul, but not Mary
39 Hijiki or kelp
40 Disassemble
41 Modern Greek
42 Curtain
43 Psychic's letters
46 Alice Kramden's friend
47 Superlatively simpatico
48 L'chaim and prosit
53 Baldwin or Guinness
55 Quaker William
57 Wapiti
59 Ship's diary

Friday's Puzzle Solved

A	G	E	D	■	B	L	A	D	E	■	A	H	A	B
N	A	M	E	■	R	O	L	E	S	■	N	E	B	R
G	R	A	S	S	R	O	O	T	S	■	I	D	E	O
E	D	I	T	H	■	P	U	R	E	■	S	G	T	S
R	E	L	I	E	D	■	D	E	N	I	S	E	■	■
■	■	■	N	A	I	L	■	■	■	S	A	F	E	S
B	A	B	Y	■	M	A	N	A	N	A	■	U	N	I
E	M	U	■	D	E	S	T	R	O	Y	■	N	I	P
L	O	S	■	E	S	T	H	E	R	■	A	D	D	S
A	S	H	E	S	■	■	■	S	A	W	N	■	■	■
■	■	P	R	I	D	E	S	■	D	E	C	R	E	E
S	T	I	R	■	E	B	A	Y	■	A	H	O	R	A
H	A	L	O	■	B	E	D	O	F	R	O	S	E	S
O	D	O	R	■	T	R	I	K	E	■	R	I	C	E
O	A	T	S	■	S	T	E	E	D	■	S	E	T	S

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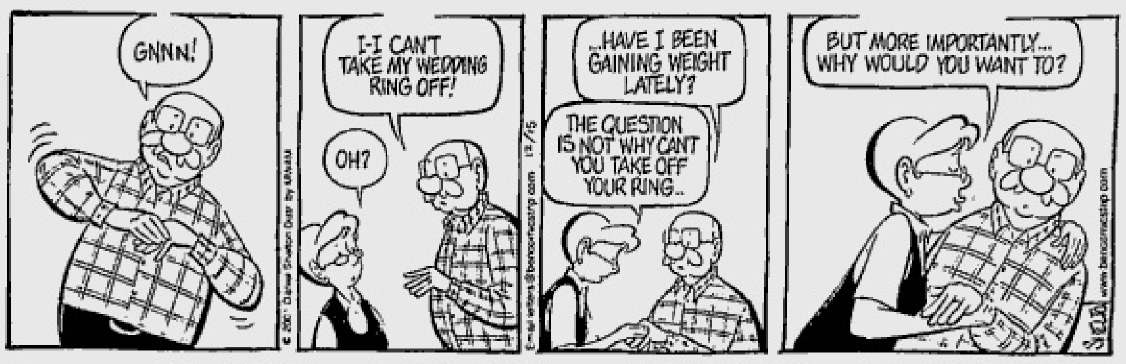
12/13/03

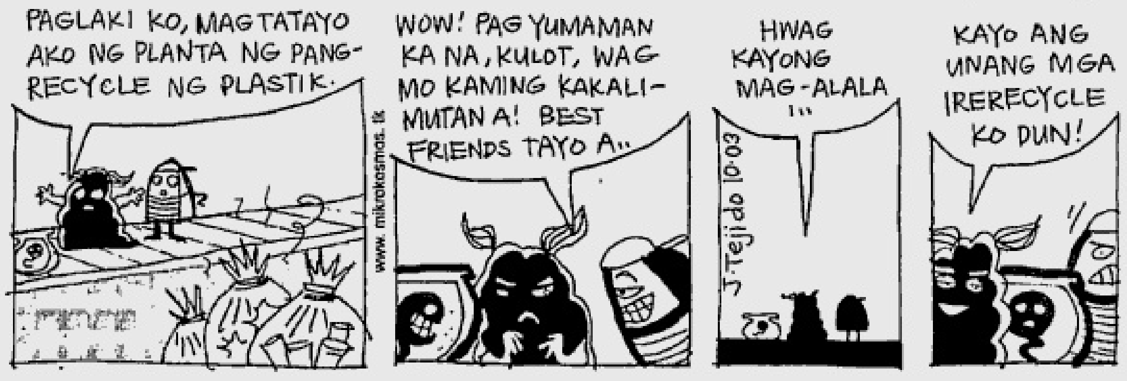
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GNNN!
I-I CAN'T TAKE MY WEDDING RING OFF!
OH?
...HAVE I BEEN GAINING WEIGHT LATELY?
THE QUESTION IS NOT WHY CAN'T YOU TAKE OFF YOUR RING..
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY... WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO?

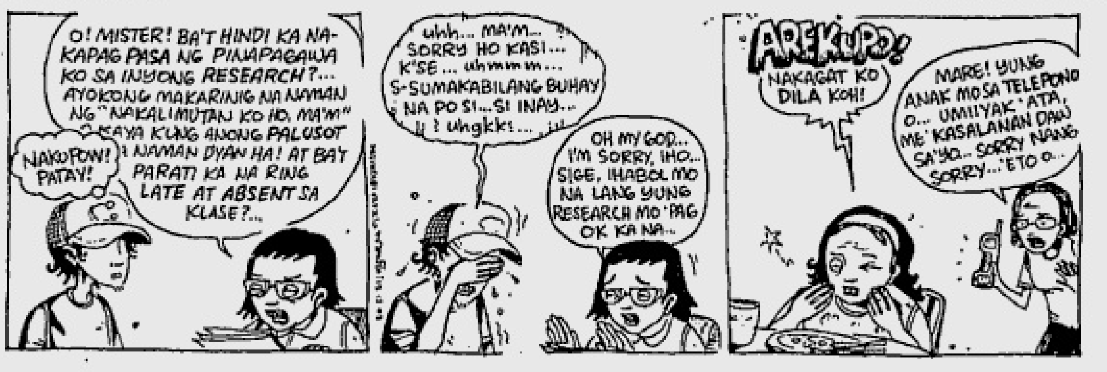
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAGLAKI KO, MAGTATAYO AKO NG PLANTA NG PANG-RECYCLE NG PLASTIK.
WOW! PAG YUMAMAN KA NA, KULOT, WAG MO KAMING KAKALIMUTAN A! BEST FRIENDS TAYO A..
HWAG KAYONG MAG-ALALA ...
KAYO ANG UNANG MGA IRERECYCLE KO DUN!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
J. Tejido 10-03

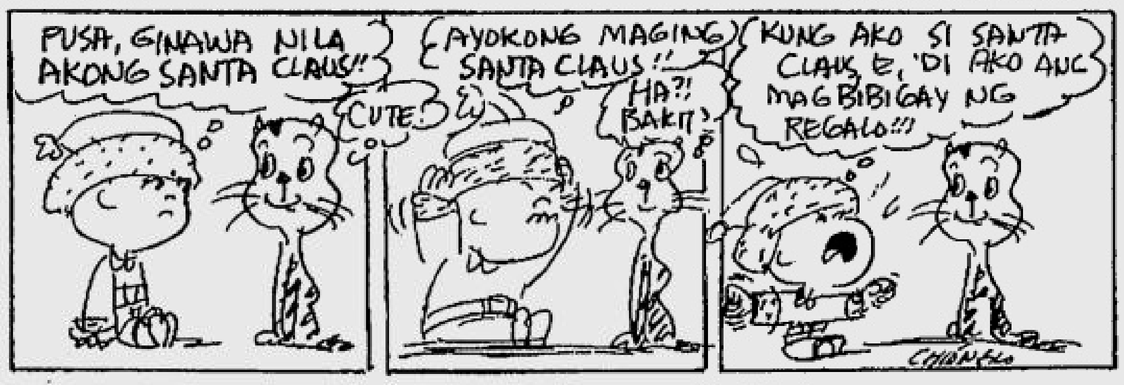
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


O! MISTER! BA'T HINDI KA NAKAPAG PASA NG PINAPAGAWA KO SA INYONG RESEARCH?... AYOKONG MAKARINIG NA NAMAN NG "NAKALIMUTAN KO HO, MA'M" O KAYA KUNG ANONG PALUSOT NA NAMAN DYAN HA! AT BA'T PARATI KA NA RING LATE AT ABSENT SA KLASE?...
NAKUPOW! PATAY!
uhh... MA'M... SORRY HO KASI... K'SE... uhmmm... S-SUMAKABILANG BUHAY NA PO SI... SI INAY... ! ungkk!...
OH MY GOD... I'M SORRY, IHO... SIGE, IHABOL MO NA LANG YUNG RESEARCH MO 'PAG OK KA NA...
AREKUPO!
NAKAGAT KO DILA KOH!
MARE! YUNG ANAK MO SA TELEPONO O... UMIIYAK 'ATA, ME KASALANAN DAW SA'YO... SORRY NANG SORRY... 'ETO O...

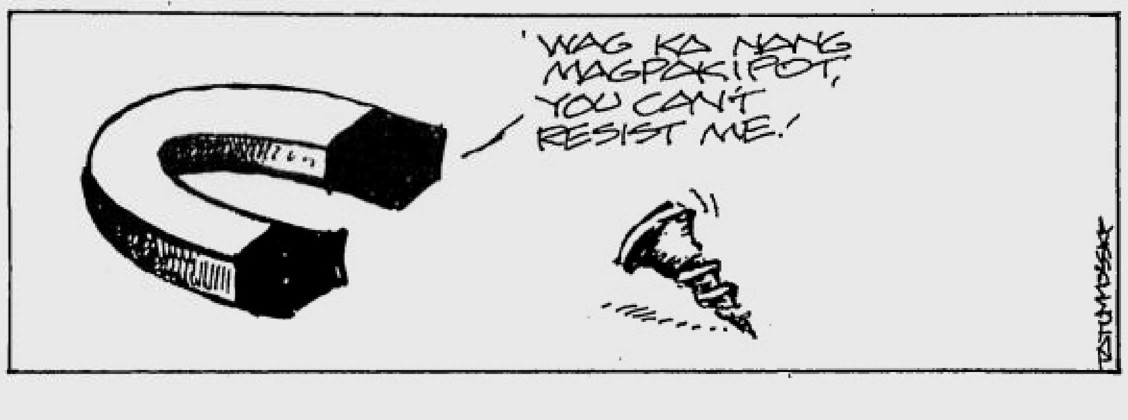
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, GINAWA NILA AKONG SANTA CLAUS!!
CUTE.
AYOKONG MAGING SANTA CLAUS!!
HA?! BAKIT?
KUNG AKO SI SANTA CLAUS E, 'DI AKO ANG MAGBIBIGAY NG REGALO!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


'WAG KA NANG MAGPAKIPOT, YOU CAN'T RESIST ME!

Stars play quirky roles in new movies

'Man on Fire,' 'The Runaway Jury,' 'Cheaper by the Dozen,' 'Agent Cody Banks 3,' 'First Daughter' and 'Girl Next Door' offer varied viewing options

By Nestor U. Torre

DENZEL Washington stars in 20th Century Fox's "Man on Fire" as a bitter and remorseful former US Marine who moves to Mexico City to work as the bodyguard of a wealthy family that has gotten kidnapping threats.

WASHINGTON. Plays bodyguard of a wealthy family in "Man on Fire."

CUSACK. Topbills big-screen adaptation of John Grisham's "The Runaway Jury."

Vengeance

When their 10-year-old daughter (Dakota Fanning) is indeed kidnapped and murdered, Washington's character devotes himself to wreaking vengeance on her killers.

Steve Martin topbills the remake of "Cheaper by the Dozen," a '50s movie about an efficiency expert who tries to run his family according to the same principles he uses in the corporate world.

When Martin gets a job offer to coach football in a Chicago university, it's a big change for his wife and 12 kids. An additional complication is his wife's burgeoning writing career, which takes her out of the house more often.

They are thus forced to find new ways of parenting their many kids, but their styles aren't always compatible. (Martin's wife is played by Helen Hunt.)

Conjoined Siamese twins

Matt Damon and Greg Kinnear star as Bob and Walt Tenor, conjoined Siamese twins. They are winners at everything and are happy with their life together—until Walt decides to become a Hollywood actor, and persuades his reluctant sibling to go along for the ride!

For his part, John Cusack is the lead in the big-screen adaptation of "Runaway Jury," John Grisham's best-selling novel. Cusack plays a member of the jury in a landmark lawsuit against a gun manufacturer.

He conspires with a woman (Rachel Weisz) to swing the verdict, and finds himself in conflict with an idealistic lawyer (Dustin Hoffman) and a jury consultant (Gene Hackman) who will do anything to get the verdict he wants.

Teenstar Frankie Muniz returns as Cody Banks in "Agent Cody Banks 3," as the precociously young spy who's a great crimebuster, but can't figure out how to confidently talk to girls.

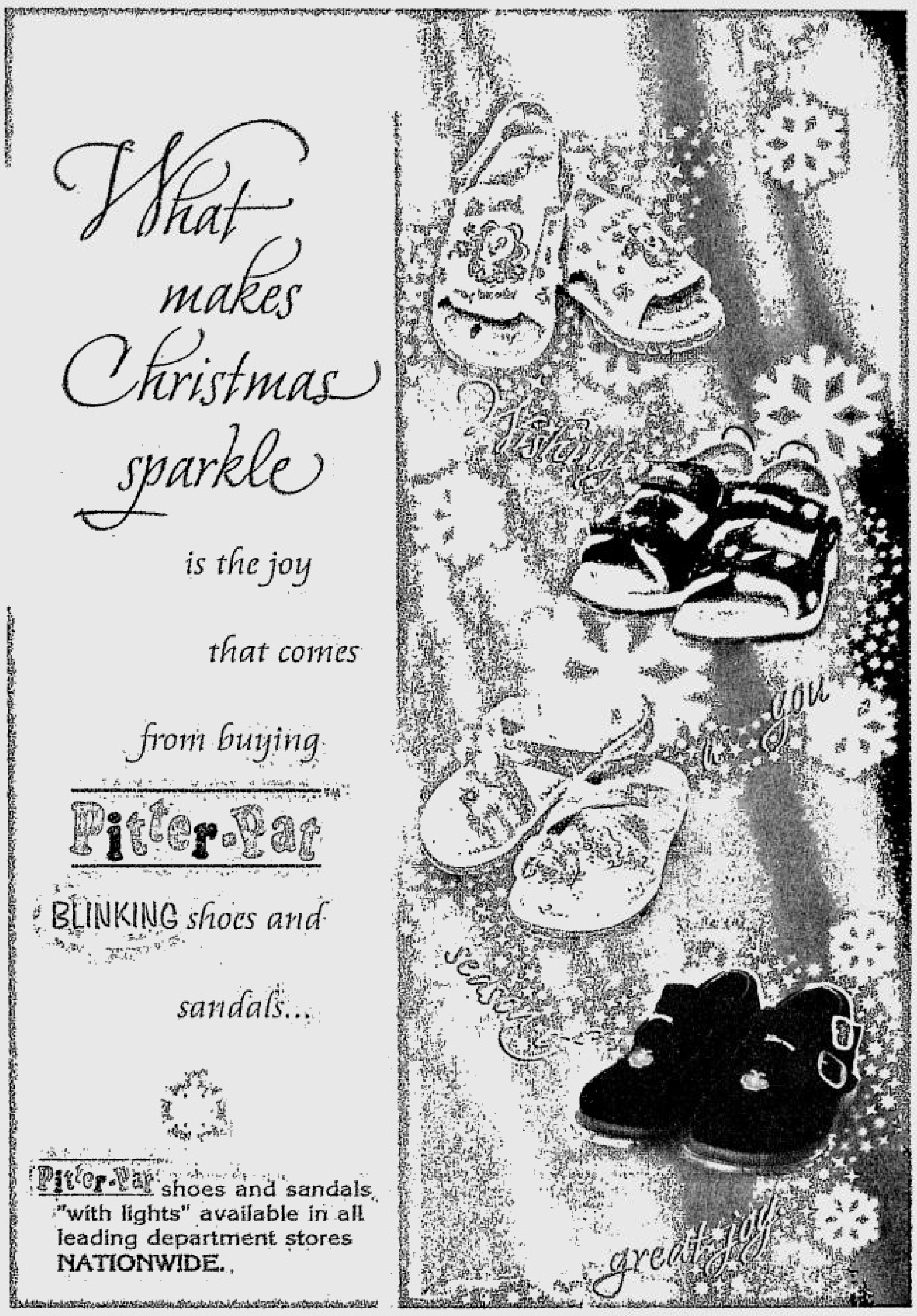
He goes to London as a foreign exchange student, but discovers that he's really there for another assignment. He's assisted by a new female agent (Hannah Spearritt), and falls hard for her.

Teenage offspring

In "First Daughter," Katie Holmes is cast as the teenage offspring of the president of the United States (Michael Keaton). She demands to be allowed to go to college without Secret Service agents watching her every move, and her father is forced to agree.

As a safeguard, however, he assigns a young agent (Marc Blucas) to pose as a student and keep an eye on her. Expectedly, they fall for each other, but the romance turns sour when she discovers his "ulterior" motives.

Finally, the teen comedy, "Girl Next Door," stars Emile Hirsch, as a serious student who has his disciplined life turned upside down when he meets the gorgeous girl next door who turns out to be a former porn star!



What makes Christmas sparkle is the joy that comes from buying
Pitter-Pat
BLINKING *shoes and sandals...*

Pitter-Pat shoes and sandals "with lights" available in all leading department stores NATIONWIDE.

Gift Ideas for the Gift-Giving Season

storage plush boxes
colored vases
votives
photo frames
decorative trays
dinnerware
scented candles
Great designs Great prices

our Home

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SM CITY FAIRVIEW
SM CITY BACOOR
SM SOUTHMALL
SM CITY PAMPANGA
SM CITY ILOILO
SM CITY LUCENA
SM CITY BAGUIO
SM CITY MARILAO

DANIEL Bruehl, left, and director Wolfgang Becker win honors for "Goodbye Lenin!" AP

German film tops European Film Awards

BERLIN—The German hit, "Goodbye, Lenin!," picked up the top honors Saturday at the annual European Film Awards ceremony, while the best director award went to Denmark's Lars von Trier for "Dogville," a dark drama starring Nicole Kidman.

Box-office sensation

Wolfgang Becker's "Goodbye, Lenin!" has become a box-office sensation in its home country since its release in the spring. As well as the best film award, it got the best actor plum, for Daniel Bruehl, and the best screenwriter award for Bernd Lichtenberg.

The movie, a tragicomedy that follows the story of a devoted communist who emerges from a coma months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, already swept the annual German Film Prize ceremony in June.

"I'm overjoyed," said Bruehl, a West German who plays the son of the movie's heroine, who tries to spare her the shock of communism's collapse by pretending nothing has changed. "This film was like a history lesson for me."

Fictitious town

"Dogville," set in a small, fictitious town in the Rocky Mountains during the Depression, excited critics at the Cannes Film Festival in May but failed to land any prize for "Breaking the Waves" director Von Trier. In addition to Kidman, the film stars Lauren Bacall and Stellan Skarsgard.

At Saturday's ceremony, the European Film Academy's best actress award went to Charlotte Rampling for her role as an uptight British mystery writer in French director Francois Ozon's "Swimming Pool."

Alongside the three films, the other nominees for best movie were: Michael Winterbottom's "In This World," winner of the top Golden Bear prize at this year's Berlin Film Festival; Isabel Coixet's "My Life Without Me" and Stephen Frears' "Dirty Pretty Things."

French director Claude Chabrol won this year's lifetime achievement award.

"It's a lot for me," Chabrol said. "I believe in European cinema. For its future, we need international films."

Last year's best film prize went to Pedro Almodovar's "Talk to Her" at a ceremony held in Rome. The Spaniard also picked up the best director award. *AP*

KIDMAN. Female star of Lars von Trier's "Dogville."

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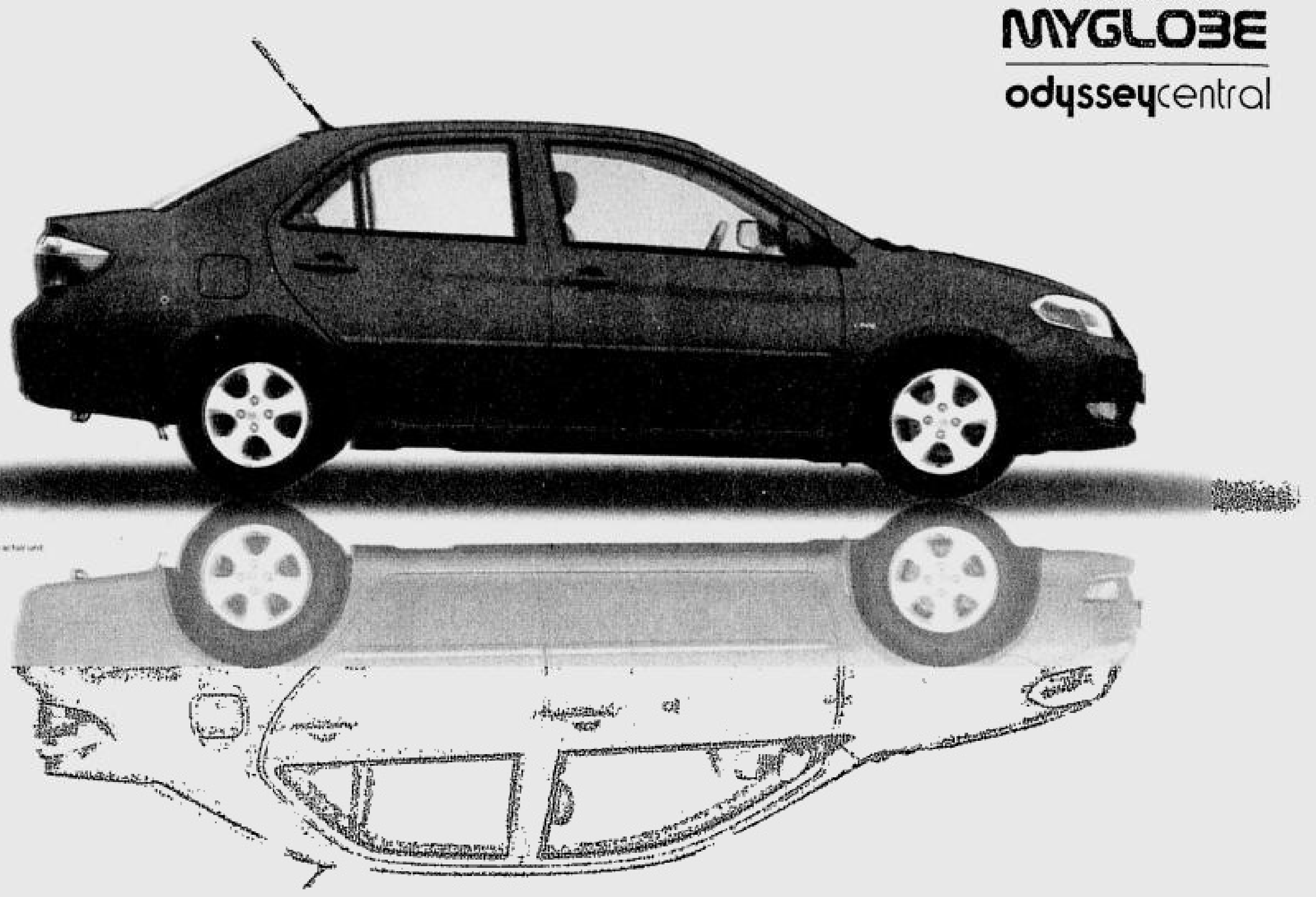

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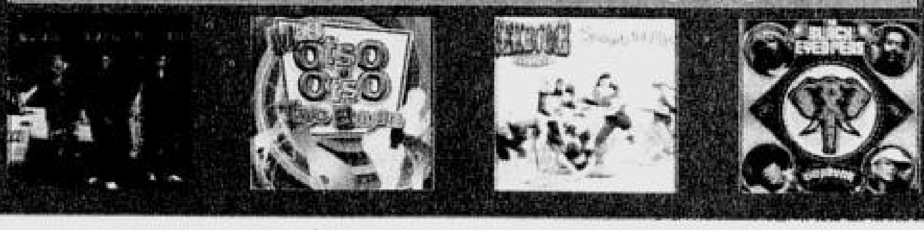

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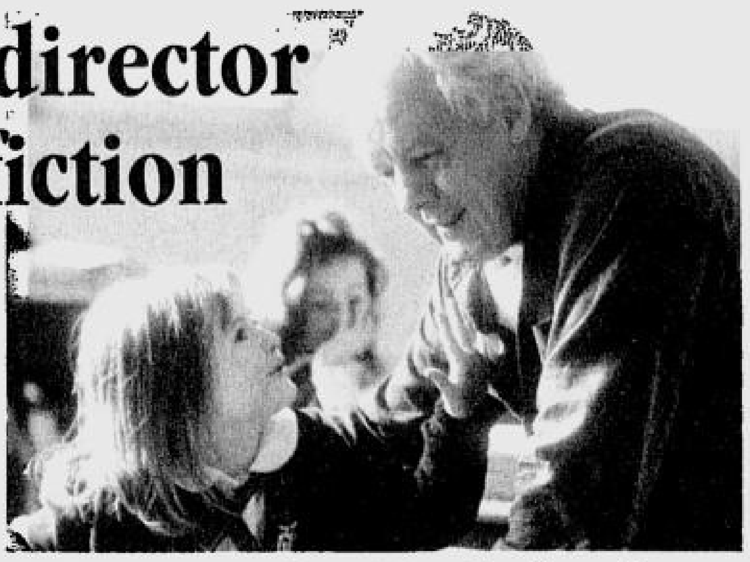
'In America' director finds fact in fiction



SHERIDAN (right) turned the spotlight on himself in new film. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES—If truth is stranger than fiction, no one knows it better than director and screenwriter Jim Sheridan.

The Irish filmmaker's new movie, "In America," which he labels "semi-autobiographical," made its debut in major US cities in late November.

Real lives

In past works like 1989's "My Left Foot" and 1993's "In the Name of the Father," Sheridan focused on telling audiences about the real lives of other people—a quadriplegic who overcomes his handicap and becomes a painter, and a father and son falsely imprisoned for an Irish Republican Army bombing.

For "In America," he turned the spotlight on himself—sort of—because when the tale of his family's first year in New York seemed unbelievable, he resorted to that time-honored show biz tradition. He lied.

In storytelling, of course, they call it dramatic license. In Hollywood, they simply call it a movie.

"Here's the trouble," Sheridan told Reuters. "When you write your own story, you find real life doesn't have plot points." A story's plot turns at certain points, and characters fulfill given functions. In movies, generally speaking, plots twist and characters act within a familiar framework that helps audiences understand the story.

Tale of opportunity

"In America" is a tale of opportunity, getting a chance to start over, being part of something big and choosing to engage whatever that thing is, as opposed to withdrawing from it.

"I love America as a melting pot. America, now, seems to take one of two choices—either being isolationist, or being part of the melting pot. (The pot) is where the dream is, and that is important to maintain," said Sheridan.

Sheridan and his family moved to New York in 1982, when he was in his early 30s, and lived in a rundown section of Manhattan.

"In America" tells of an Irishman named Johnny, his wife Sarah, and their daughters, Christy and Ariel, who emigrate to the city under the same conditions.

The family wants to start a fresh life, yet they are haunted emotionally by the memory of a fifth family member, a boy, who died before they arrived in the city.

In their first year in New York, they struggle to make ends meet. Johnny is an out-of-work actor and Sarah labors away at an ice cream parlor. The daughters must adjust to a new school and new traditions.

To add to the family's worries, Sarah gets pregnant, which reminds them of the tragedy of their lost son.

Amalgamation of people

To write the story, Sheridan drew from the cancer-related death of his own brother, Frankie. The director calls Johnny an amalgamation of people, including himself and his father.

"In America" took Sheridan 10 years to write because, he said, it was hard for him to dig deep into his own life.

"You always see yourself consistently, in one way. You don't see contradictions," he said.

His first notion was to write flat and leave out details that seemed boastful. But doing so made for a weak central character, so the tendency was to move in the opposite direction. Finding a balance required taking himself out of the story and looking back with a wary eye.

"You stop being an actor in your life, and start to become a person watching your own life," he said.

While deeply dramatic, the story nevertheless is filled with much humor because in all tragedy, there is some comedy.

"This is, in effect, a gentle story with huge negatives, so I had to keep it buoyant and friendly," said Sheridan.

'IN AMERICA' /12

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Community TV begins to make its mark

By Nestor U. Torre

OUR recent article about "Men in White," the hit religious show on cable TV in Pampanga, has generated interest in the prospects of community television, which some people perceive as a "welcome alternative" to Manila-based TV networks with national reach.

More relevant

Proponents of community television like its "specific" program content and treatment, which is more relevant to particular cities' or regions' interests, concerns and needs.

We hope that more community cable channels all over the country will initiate their own programs, which will reflect what each locality and its residents regard as specifically interesting, relevant and important.

Pampanga's community TV outfit, Infomax, Inc. (Channel 8 on SCN), serves as a good example in this regard. Aside from producing and telecasting the now very popular "Men in White," Infomax 8 also originates:

Latest events

"I-Max News"—a daily newscast reporting the latest events in the region.

"I-Max Special Report"—in-depth, investigative reporting on issues and controversies that concern Pampanga.

DIRECTOR Marilou Diaz-Abaya (top, center), with hosts and production staffers of Infomax 8's "Men in White."

"*Personalan*"—showcasing the region's movers and shakers and their private thoughts and lives.

"What's Hap?"—a community events program, covering concerts, festivals, launching, etc.

"*Indung Kapampangan*"—on Pampanga's rich culture, heritage, traditions and history.

"Talking Points"—round-table discussions and debates.

"*Wa Pin!*"—relax "Kabalen" style—from hotdogs to *betuteng tugak*, from classy joints to *jologs* bars, and from high fashion to "my fashion."

Cable partners

Aside from producing local TV shows, Infomax 8 does commercials, audio-visual presentations, corporate videos and film bios. It also distributes its programs to other cable operators in the region, which it regards as its "cable partners."

They include Action Channel 3 in Angeles City, Prostat Channel 3 in Mabalacat, Sattlink Channel 12 in Guagua, Lubao and Sta. Rita, Datelsat Channel 16 in Apalit, Macabebe, Masantol, San Simon, and Calumpit, Bulacan, and BroadCable Channels 6 and 20 in Arayat and Magalang.

Team

Pacing Infomax 8's team are Maureen G. Aquino, general manager and executive producer; Maruyne Gepte, creative director for programs; Patrick Canlas, creative director for advertising; Francis Navarro, head writer and musical director, and Jomel Cruz, marketing director.

We trust that other community channels will similarly realize that towns and cities in different parts of the country have viewers who are eager to support programs that focus on local interests.

Santa Fe Film Festival begins fourth annual run

SANTA FE, New Mexico—With Shirley MacLaine, Jane Fonda, Gene Hackman, Ali MacGraw, Marsha Mason, Val Kilmer and other neighbors, New Mexico's 410-year-old capital city has evolved into a major film colony. Now it's building an annual film festival.

National prominence

With a movie presence complemented by the Greer Garson Studio complex at the College of Santa Fe and by a state government determined to help the industry, the city hopes to leap closer to national film prominence with the Santa Fe Film Festival, which opened Wednesday.

It received more than 700 submissions, double last year's number, and winnowed them down to 211 features, shorts and documentaries from more than 30 countries. Only 80 were shown last year.

In its fourth year, the festival expects to sell 20,000 tickets, one-third more than last year, festival executive director Jon Bowman said.

"We're one of the fastest growing film festivals in the United States," he said.

Resident stars

With a ready-made film community of resident stars, producers, directors and writers, the festival's emergence comes at a time when filmmaking's impact on New Mexico's economy is growing dramatically.

Gov. Bill Richardson hopes that by the end of this year, the state will have reaped more than $80 million from film projects; that compares with $8 million last year. For 2004, Richardson projects the figure will rise to $160 million.

As part of a program to lure filmmakers, the state has begun offering some breaks, including interest-free loans of up to $7.5 million.

At this year's festival, director Stephen Frears, novelist-screenwriter Max Evans and actor Peter Boyle have been selected to received the 2003 Luminaria life achievement awards.

Special award

Oscar-winning writer-producer-director Walon Green will get a special lifetime award during the festival that runs through Sunday.

Frears, an Oscar nominee for "The Grifters" in 1990, also is accompanying his "Dirty Pretty Things," which is in the running for best film.

Others getting some buzz are "Indigo," a mystical look at young people with unusual psychological gifts; "House of Sand and Fog," with Jennifer Connelly and Ben Kingsley; "21 Grams," with Sean Penn and Benicio del Toro; "Cold Mountain," with Nicole Kidman and Jude Law; and "Girl With a Pearl Earring," with Colin Firth as Johannes Vermeer. *AP*

Layman's guide to medicine

GLOBAL research-based pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp and Dohme (MSD) recently launched The Merck Manual of Medical Information, Second Home Edition. Like its best-selling predecessor, the latest edition is based on The Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy, a medical reference trusted by doctors for more than a century.

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

Trip to Africa

First published in 1899, The Merck Manual accompanied Admiral Byrd as he flew over the South Pole, and Dr. Albert Schweitzer on his trip to Africa in 1913. Since then, Merck has also published The Merck Manual of Geriatrics, The Merck Veterinary Manual, and The Merck Index.

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The new edition has been expanded to reflect significant advances in medicine.

Relevant

Now covering topics from traditional herbs and alternative medicine to the latest breakthroughs in gene therapy, the book has been revised to become relevant for the 21st century.

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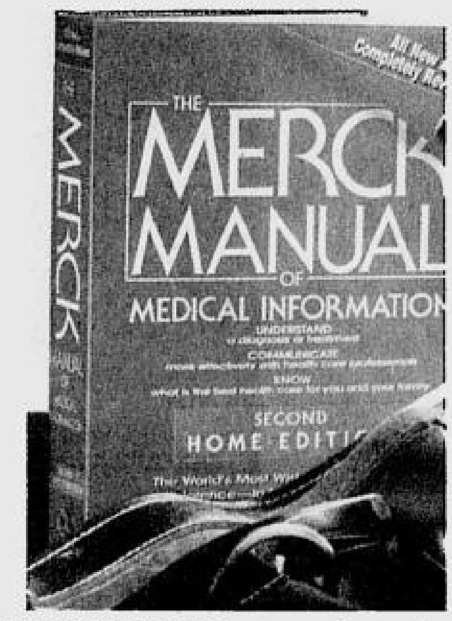

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We miss watching 'The Probe Team'

By Ronald G. Mangubat

AFTER all the brouhaha over the "The Probe Team" and GMA-7 controversy, the sad fact remains that the weekly multi-awarded program, arguably the most intelligent investigative newsmagazine on Philippine television, aired its final episode last Nov. 25. Tuesday nights will never be the same again for loyal viewers like us.

Loyal

Even when we were working abroad, we managed to watch a few "Probe" episodes because the helper of a Filipina friend of ours had been instructed to tape the show when the program was aired in Manila, and to send it to us for our own viewing pleasure. That's how loyal we were to the show.

That loyalty goes back a year after the Edsa revolution. We first saw "Probe" on ABS-CBN and were instantly impressed by its no-nonsense approach in tackling issues, its panache in storytelling, its tight editing, and style of reportage. To us, it was one of the best things that happened to Philippine TV.

Poverty

One of the first "Probe" stories we watched was on poverty and street children. In it, a vagabond boy unashamedly cried and told Cheche Lazaro, the show's host, that his mother was a whore who let her children freely roam the dangerous streets of Manila.

There was also an episode on Juan Luna's restored "Spolarium," which became controversial because some artists questioned the painting's authenticity.

These and other episodes left a vivid imprint in our mind because they could have been treated in a sensational manner or in a cut-and-dried fashion, but "Probe" dug into the heart of the issues, presented the facts clearly, and told its stories in an entertaining way, but without the frivolousness characteristic of some other telemagazine shows.

Through the years, "The Probe Team" has consistently tried to test the limits of its creative pool by attempting to unearth the "roots" of the headlines, and to make all of its stories interesting to its viewers.

Business scandal

Whether it's a heavy political tryst, a business scandal or a light travel story, the show's substance and style remained consistent, and was of superior quality.

As a result, other shows of the same genre followed. But, as these new shows tried to beat the bruising competition with advanced technology and visual flourishes, "Probe" continually reinvented itself and went a step ahead by becoming more diligent in "clearing the cobwebs" of issues. The team's commitment and dedication was evident in every episode, with producers going the extra mile in order to pursue their stories.

It experimented on changing formats and styles and tried to search for the right formula that would click with its late-evening audience. Moreover, the team listened intently to its viewers. When they were criticized for being elitist, they gradually shifted to Filipino, and even had a regular man-on-the-street interview to get the pulse of the masses and answer the call of the times.

29 awards

In its 16 years of existence, the "Probe Team," has garnered 29 awards, both locally and internationally — solid proof of its substance and production excellence.

Now that the program has gone off the air, we'll certainly miss its stories, adventures and travels.

For years, we vicariously probed with Lazaro's dynamic and peripatetic team and climbed mountains, rode all modes of transportation, starved or savored a bacchanalian treat, entered elegant mansions and decrepit shanties, stared at death and pain, celebrated life and joy.

Pilgrimage

We were with them when they covered elections, talked to rebels, chased celebrities, waded through floods and ashfall, joined a pilgrimage, marched with the rallyists and drank cappuccino in Vienna or wine in Australia. We never had it so good!

If personalities like Lea Salonga, Manny Pacquiao and Paeng Nepumoceno make us proud of being Filipinos, we'd like to include Cheche Lazaro and "Probe" on our list.

In 16 years, they have informed, enlightened and entertained us on a lot of issues and have made a significant difference in our life. We hope they go back on the TV screen soon. It's been only three weeks, but we already miss watching them!

'In America' director finds . . .

From page 11

He said he is often asked if writing "In America" was cathartic, and the answer is, no. "It made me even more volcanic," he said.

To help him, Sheridan enlisted his daughters, Naomi and Kirsten, who are fledgling filmmakers who added a more American perspective because they were schooled in the United States under its traditions.

Top honor

As with "My Left Foot" and "In the Name of The Father," there is talk of an Oscar, the US film industry's top honor, in the Hollywood air for "In America." And that is the truth.

But many events in the movie are false, Sheridan admits. It opens when Johnny's family is stopped crossing into the United States from Canada. The border patrol that halts them eventually allows them to pass.

In reality, Sheridan was stopped by police and arrested. When he lacked money to pay his fine, the cops felt so sorry that they paid the fine and Sheridan was free to leave.

The sentiment was the same—welcome to America and good luck—but the truth was stranger than fiction.

"In America" is being released by Fox Searchlight, the specialty film division of Twentieth Century Fox film studio, which is a unit of News Corp. Ltd.'s Fox Entertainment Group. *Reuters*

Euan Morton makes . . .

From page 14

him praise—the Associated Press called Morton "a revelation . . . a small guy with a distinct, haunting voice, (who) quietly anchors the production"—Morton was not trained as a singer. He studied acting, leaving the small town of Bo'ness, Scotland, at 16 to attend drama school in London.

Behind the makeup, says O'Donnell, Morton and O'Dowd are "totally different breeds."

Exotic and wonderful

"They're both exotic and wonderful in their own way," she says. "But you know, one (O'Dowd) is a peacock, flustered and angry, and the other one (Morton) is a peaceful dove. Totally different kind of bird."

Morton was too young to catch the real Boy George in his heyday. He remembers first seeing him in a rerun of "Top of the Pops."

"He had this massive white hat and dreadlocks, and I remember asking my mom the question that everyone else asks, 'Is that a boy or a girl?' My mum said, 'It's a boy, and I love him. I think he's beautiful. I think he's very brave and beautiful.'"

Still, years later, it was hard for the Mortons to watch their son Euan take on the role. "They come from a little town in Scotland where men don't kiss men and where men don't wear dresses and high-heeled shoes and makeup," he says. *AP*

Albert Martinez is much happier now

By Jocelyn Valle

WHILE many Filipinos relentlessly chase the American dream, Albert Martinez relishes his decision to give it up years ago. After living in the States for years, the former matinee idol returned home in the mid-'90s with wife Liezl and kids Alyanna and Alfonso (the youngest, Alyssa, was born here).

Halted career

"I'm much happier now," he beams. "My family's doing great. I already have an 18-year-old daughter (Alyanna)! And I'm doing what I love, which is acting." Indeed, after trying to revive his halted career for sometime, Albert has been rewarded with acting awards, and renewed respect from colleagues and fans.

He's also expanded his territory in show biz as a director, first on television and soon in the movies. Albert is very keen on a project called "Full House," which he describes as somehow similar to "The Joy Luck Club." "The main characters, however, are all males, and they don't play *mahjong*," he points out, adding that he's eyeing cousin-in-law Aga Muhlach, Edu Manzano and Ricky Davao to co-star with him.

Busiest actor

"We're just waiting for our schedules to jibe," he says, crossing his fingers. Edu is the busiest among the actors as he's a mainstay in several TV programs, including the sitcom, "OK, Fine, Whatever," with Aga, who, in turn, is shooting a movie for Star Cinema opposite Kristine Hermosa.

Albert also wants to direct a superhero flick someday because he's a fan of comic books. "I used to collect them when I was younger," he shares. "They're now in the possession of my son."

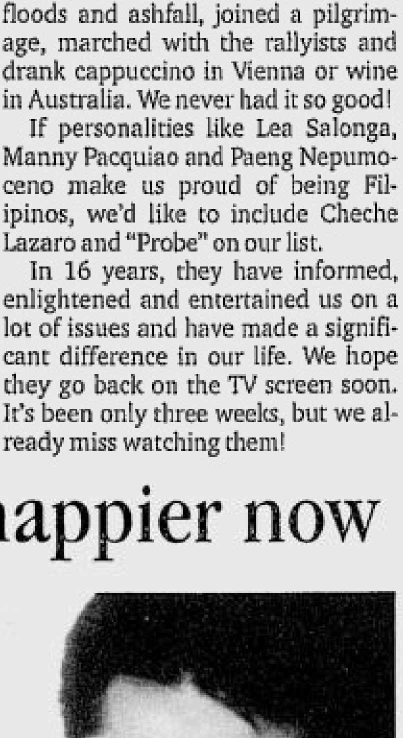
Main villain

In Premiere Productions' "Mars' Ravelo's Captain Barbell," though, Albert plays the main villain, Lagablab (the others are Rufa Mae Quinto as Freezy and Jeffrey Quizon as a half-man, half-rat creature). "I'm a superhero to my wife and kids, anyway," he grins.

Albert is, nonetheless, excited about the project. "At last, my children can watch my movie," he smiles.

For a long time now, he's been portraying offbeat roles in adult films—the only exception was "Magnifico."

"Politics is not my cup of tea," he reveals. "I don't understand it. I love to help, but I think there are other ways to be of service to people."



MARTINEZ. Relishes his decision to give up the American Dream.

But Albert declares that he's supporting Fernando Poe Jr.'s candidacy for the presidency. "We need someone we can respect and be proud of," he shares.

Euan Morton makes Broadway debut as Boy George

MORTON. Portrays the flamboyant '80s pop icon.

NEW YORK—Boy George sashays through a darkened London nightclub filled with drag queens, druggies and devotees of debauchery. His Kabuki makeup piled inches thick, he belts out pitch-perfect renditions of "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?" and "Karma Chameleon."

Convincing

The trick is, under the makeup is young Scottish actor Euan Morton. The real Boy George is there, too, onstage at Broadway's Plymouth Theater in the new musical, "Taboo." But Morton's rendition is so convincing that some audience members wonder if he's the real thing.

"People have debates in the theater when I come on, asking, 'Is that him?'" Morton says one recent night before the show. "You know, Boy George is 40. He's bigger than me. Of course, I'm not Boy George."

Bizarre swap

The real Boy George—George O'Dowd—plays fashion designer and performance artist Leigh Bowery, at times sharing the stage with Morton as his young self in a bizarre identity swap.

For O'Dowd, watching Morton trace Boy George's path from a fame-hungry, love-starved young man in Act 1 to a fame-loathing, drug-addicted star in Act 2 has become a familiar routine—the two are reprising the roles from the original London production.

"He does it very well," says O'Dowd, who also wrote the score for "Taboo."

"If I was watching somebody playing me as a caricature, I'd have a problem with that. But Euan's just so fantastic."

When he was tapped for the role, the 26-year-old Morton was working at a Tower Records store in London. Munching on eggs and toast at Broadway hangout Angus McIndoe's before a performance, Morton reflected on his rise from a self-described "no

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Euan Morton makes Broadway debut as Boy George

From page 13

BOY George's life story is immortalized in "Taboo."

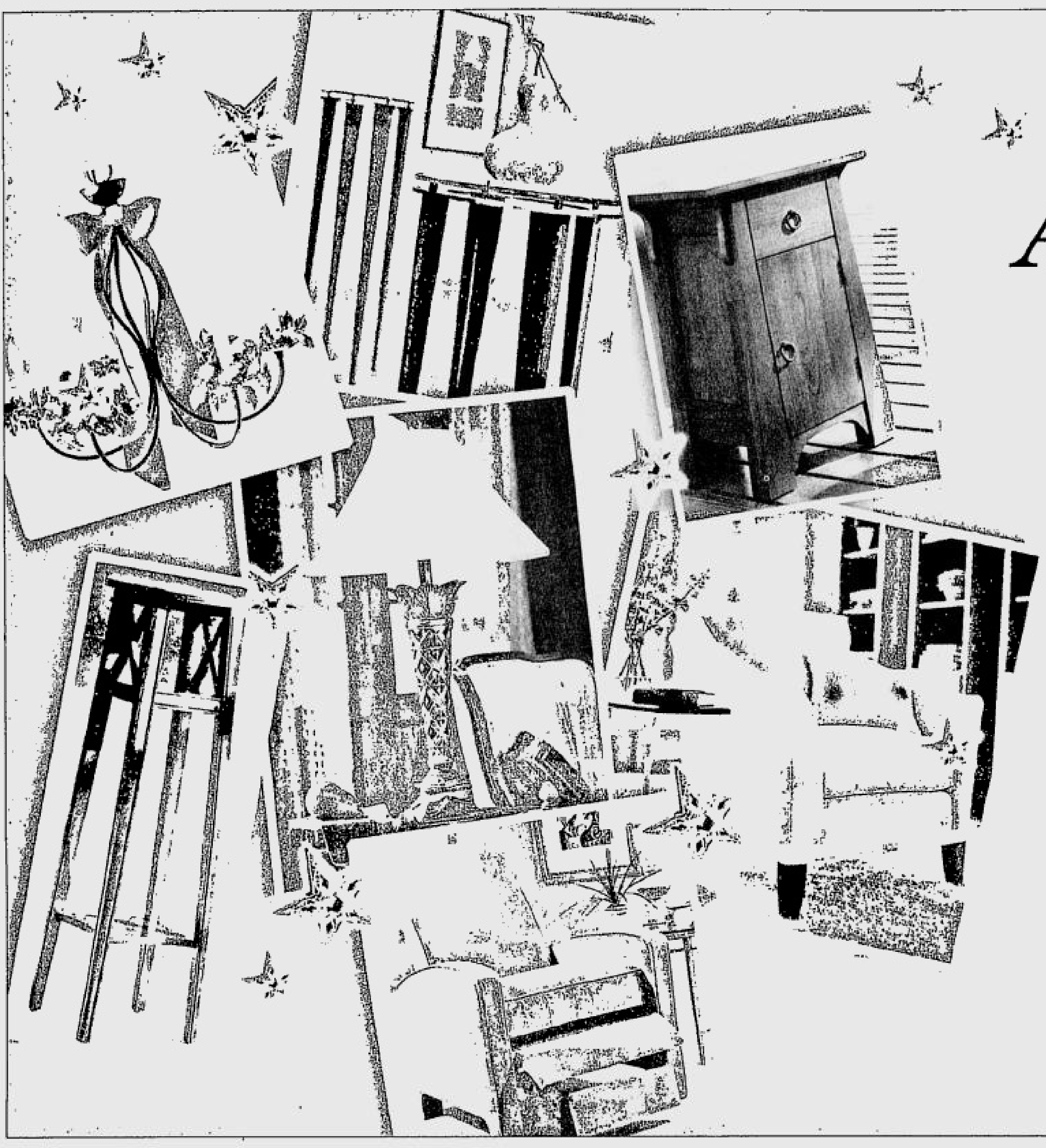
one" to become the star of a $10 million Broadway musical.

"I woke up the beginning of this week and thought, 'I don't think I'm ready for this,'" he says. "I honestly never wanted to grow up and be famous. I wanted to be rich. I wanted to buy my mom a house."

He's one step closer to that dream, too: Since coming to Broadway, Morton has been sending money home to his mother so she could leave her job at the post office.

Though his crooning has earned

EUAN/12



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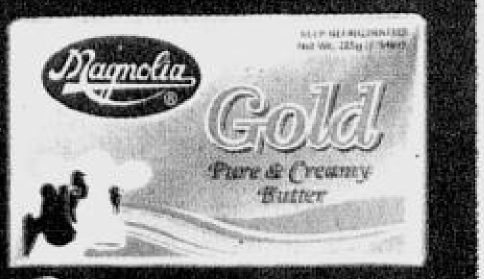
Christmas Chicken Roll
by
Sylvia Reynoso-Gala

Ingredients:
1 kilo Magnolia Fresh Chicken
1/4 cup soy sauce
1 teaspoon pepper.

For the stuffing:
1/4 cup MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER, softened
1 cup Magnolia Chicken Giniling
1 cup white onions, chopped
1 cup Purefoods Classic Honeycured Bacon, chopped
2 cups white bread cubes
2 eggs
1/4 cup parsley
1/4 cup whole walnuts
1/2 cup whole black pitted olives
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 tsp thyme

For the gravy:
1/4 cup MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER
1 chicken cube
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
3 cups milk
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper

Procedure:
1. Carefully cut the chicken at the back down the center to remove flesh from bones. Cut off wings. Debone drumsticks completely.
2. Lay chicken flat on a tray lined with 2 layers of foil. Rub with soy sauce and pepper.
3. Mix the stuffing ingredients in a bowl.
4. Spread stuffing on chicken.
5. Fold 3 sides of chicken. Roll tightly as with a jelly roll. Enclose in foil.
6. Steam over high heat for 1 hour and 30 minutes.
7. Open foil. Cool. Slice diagonally into 1/2 inch thick rings.
8. For the gravy, mix drippings from chicken in a saucepan with the gravy ingredients. Let boil, until slightly thick. Serve separately in a sauceboat.



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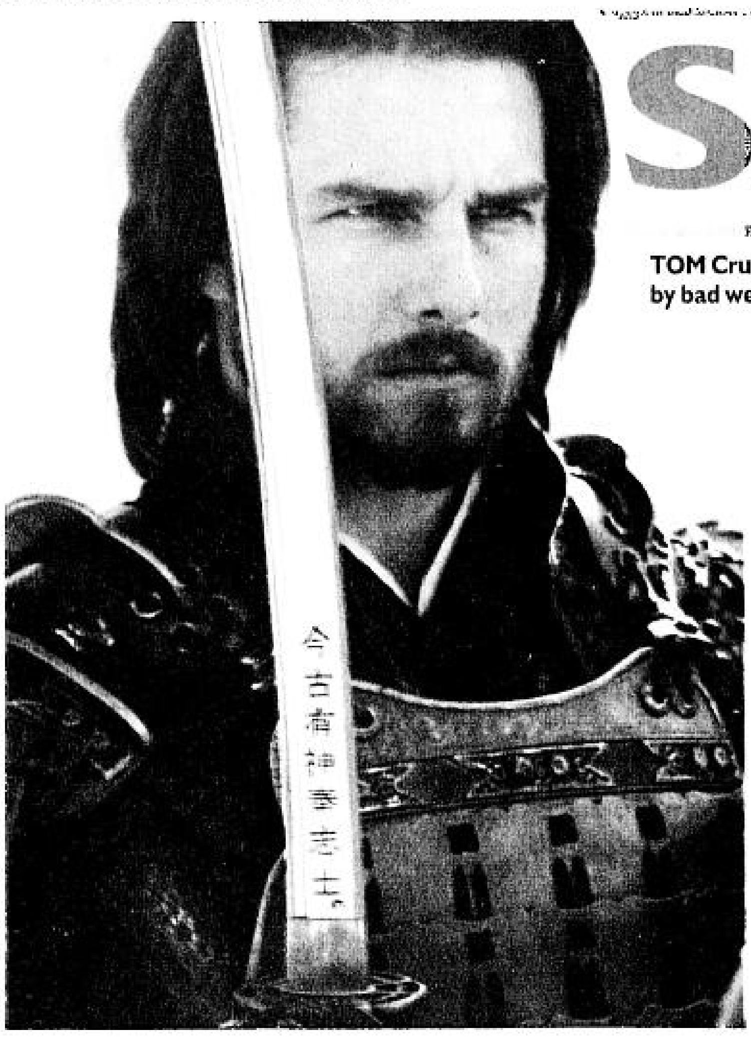


TOM Cruise's latest movie was affected by bad weather. REUTERS

Cruise weathers storm to lead US box office

LOS ANGELES—A kimono-clad Tom Cruise wielding a large sword chased "The Cat in the Hat" from its perch atop the North American box office with his new period epic, "The Last Samurai," but a snowstorm in the US northeast took a big slice out of movie ticket sales.

Worst opening

"The Last Samurai" earned a modest $24.4 million in its first three days since opening Dec. 5, according to studio estimates issued on Sunday. It ranked as the worst opening for a Cruise wide-release since Stanley Kubrick's 1999 erotic thriller, "Eyes Wide Shut," which opened with $21.7 million and finished with $56 million. Cruise's previous film, "Minority Report," opened with $35.7 million last year.

"Considering what we faced on the East Coast, we're very, very pleased," said Dan Fellman, president of distribution at Warner Bros. Pictures, which released "The Last Samurai." He estimated the film could have made $29 million if not for the bad weather, which dumped more than a foot of snow, closed airports and left thousands without power over the weekend in Washington and New England.

Cruise stars as a US Civil War veteran who becomes a Samurai warrior in 19th Century Japan. The opening for the film, which was budgeted at $140 million, ranked as the best for a new release in the traditionally slow weekend following the Thanksgiving holiday. The old mark of $18.7 million was set by "Behind Enemy Lines" in 2001.

Underwhelmed

Critics were generally underwhelmed, with such verdicts as "ponderous" (USA Today) and "condescending" (New York Post).

The film, shot mostly in New Zealand, was directed by Edward Zwick, whose credits include "Legends of the Fall" and "Glory."

The top 10 contained one other new release, "Honey," a hip-hop dance drama starring Jessica Alba, which opened at No. 2 with $14 million. The film, playing mostly to females under 21, was budgeted at about $18 million.

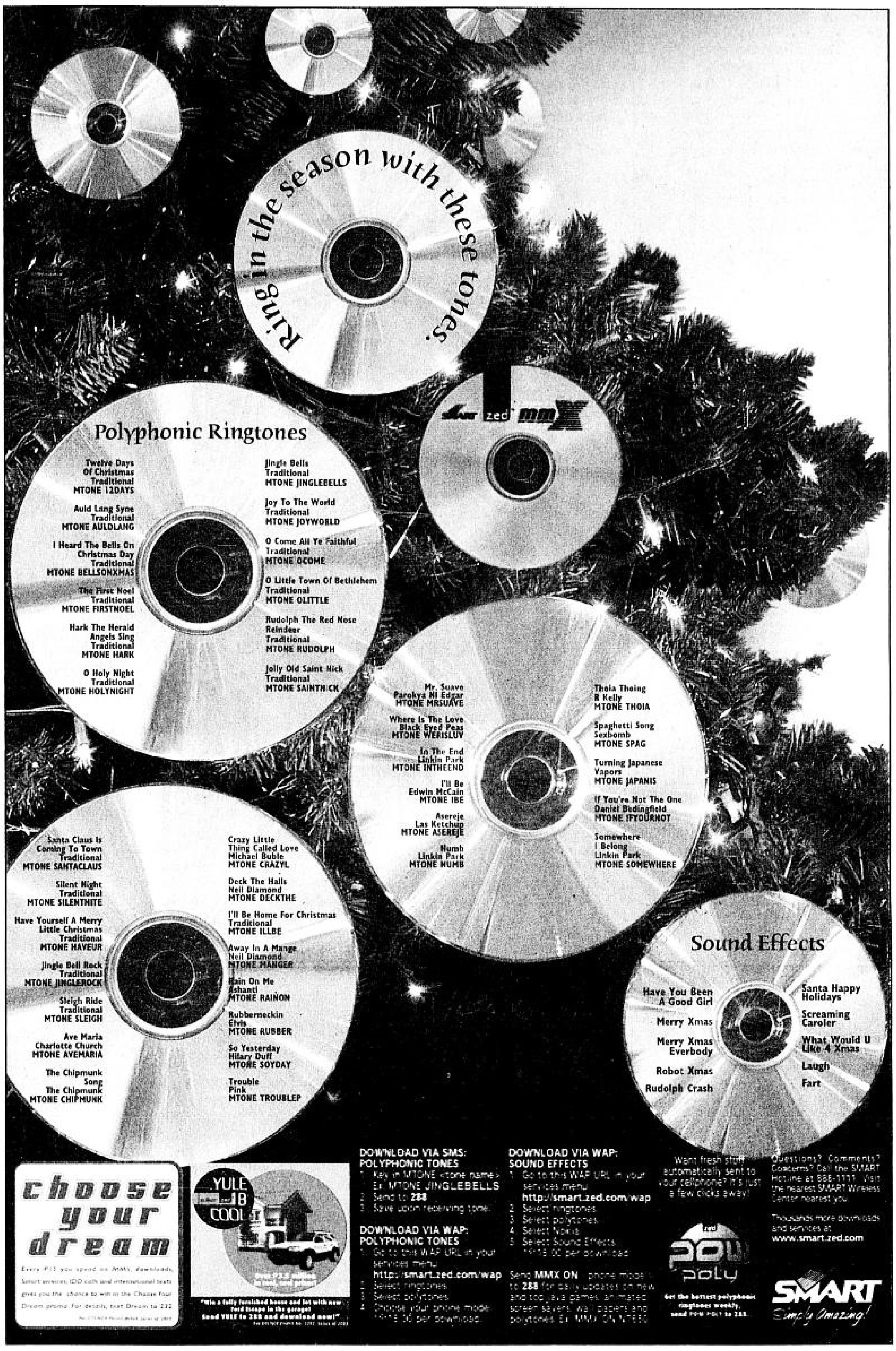
Universal's "The Cat in the Hat," starring Mike Myers as the titular feline, slid four places to No. 5 after two weeks at No. 1, with $7.3 million. The three-week total for the critically reviled adaptation of the Dr. Seuss children's book rose to $85.5 million.

In between, at No. 3, was Eddie Murphy's "The Haunted Mansion" with $9.5 million, followed by the hit comedy, "Elf," with $8.1 million.

Top 12

Ticket sales for the top 12 films slid 27 percent from last weekend to $92 million. But, even with the bad weather, the tally represented a 34 percent improvement over the year-ago period, when "Die Another Day" was tops with $12.8 million.

New releases next Friday include "Love Don't Cost a Thing," an urban teen comedy; "Something's Gotta Give," a romantic comedy starring Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton, and "Stuck On You," a comedy from the Farrelly brothers. But the real action takes place the following Wednesday with the opening of "The Return of the King," the much-awaited final installment in filmmaker Peter Jackson's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. *Reuters*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Inspiration in a time of desperation

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE CHRISTMAS spirit may be in need of perking up this season, so these Hallmark Channel films (all screenings at 9 p.m.) may be just what the movie doctor ordered to provide much-needed inspiration in this time of desperation:

Dec. 14, "The Edge of America." The movie is about the experience of an African-American high school English teacher who agrees to coach an all-girl basketball team in an Indian reservation.

Despite their inherent differences, the coach and his young players learn profound life lessons from each other.

Dec. 21, " A Christmas Visitor." A family grieving over the death of a son in the Gulf War has lost the Christmas spirit, along with the desire to celebrate the season.

But their mood changes when a hitchhiker appears, and pretends to have known the deceased young man. Stars include William Devane and Dean McDermott.

Dec. 25, "Santa Jr." Chris Kringle Jr. tries to prove his suitability as his jolly and generous father's heir by delivering toys to many kids. But he is mistaken for a notorious thief, and is jailed. Will this traumatic experience make Chris lose his faith in the season's magic? Judd Nelson and Lauren Holly star.

Dec. 27, "Ghostbusters," with Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd.

Dec. 28, "A Musical Christmas from the Vatican." Rocker Bryan Adams leads the joyful celebration at the Vatican, with Pope John Paul II in attendance.

"SANTA JR." Nick Stabile stars as Kris Kringle's heir.

Dec. 31, "Multiplicity." Michael Keaton plays a happily cloned guy, while Andie MacDowell is cast as his understanding wife.

In addition to these new films, Hallmark will also screen "Snow Queen," Parts 1 and 2 on Dec. 22 and 23; "Silent Night" on Dec. 24, and "Mr. Saint Nick" on Dec. 26.

'Dekada '70' on TV

Cinema One telecasts Chito Roño's acclaimed "Dekada '70" on Sunday Cine Premiere at 8:30 p.m. on Dec. 14. The film shows what happens to a middle-class family caught in the changes and upheavals of the tumultuous '70s that empowered Filipinos to topple the dictatorship.

Stars include Vilma Santos, Christopher de Leon, Piolo Pascual and Marvin Agustin.

Pamaskong Handog sale

Star Records will be holding its Pamaskong Handog sale from Dec. 15 to 23 at the Arts Plaza in front of the Greenhills Theater Mall.

Items on sale are albums and video releases of Star Cinema and Sky Films movies, at discounts as high as 70 percent.

Stars like Jamie Rivera, Vina Morales, Jessa Zaragoza and Akafellas will visit the Arts Plaza from 3 to 6 p.m. daily.

"LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RINGS." TV premiere on popular cable channel.

Movies on TV

On HBO, Dec. 13 at 7:30 a.m., "Almost Famous." 1:30 p.m., "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." 9 p.m., "Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings." Dec. 14 at 4 p.m., "Children of A Lesser God." Dec. 15 at 7:15 p.m., "With Honors." 11 p.m., "Forrest Gump."

Dec. 16 at 9 p.m., "A Beautiful Mind." Dec. 17 at 10 a.m., "A Town Without Christmas." 11 p.m., "Race the Sun." Dec. 18 at 10:30 a.m., "Riding in Cars with Boys." 11:55 p.m., "Dinner with Friends." Dec. 19 at 8:30 a.m., "The Man Who Saved Christmas."

On Cinemax, Dec. 13 at 5:30 p.m., "Regarding Henry." Dec. 14 at 2:15 p.m., "To Be the Best." 3:15 a.m., "When Worlds Collide." Dec. 15 at 9 p.m., "Crossing Delancey."

Dec. 16 at 2:15 p.m., "From Here to Eternity." Dec. 17 at 10:30 a.m., "Ocean's 11." 2:15 a.m., "Another Country." Dec. 18 at 2 p.m., "The Bridges of Toko-Ri." Dec. 19 at 7:30 p.m., "Picture Claire."

Special treats on HBO

Fantasy-adventure film buffs, do make a special note of the screening on HBO on Dec. 13 of *two* acclaimed blockbusters, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" at 1:30 p.m., and "Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings" at 9 p.m.

Why not try to clear your schedule so you can be at home to view both fantasy-adventure productions today? Invite some like-minded friends and make a viewing party of it, why don't you? If we didn't have such a full schedule, we would.

Pamaskong Aliwan

At 1 p.m. today, Star City and the Manila Broadcasting Co. present Pamaskong Aliwan, a grand Christmas fiesta that features a dance parade and float competition, the Reyna ng Aliwan beauty pageant, Christmas tree and parol competitions, etc.

Venue is the MBC bldg., Star City, at the CCP Complex.

Choral competition

Ever-Gotesco Ortigas is holding a choral competition, "Himig ng Pasko," at 4 p.m. today. The ongoing competition started last Dec. 6 at Ever-Gotesco Commonwealth. The winners will be showcased at Ever-Gotesco Commonwealth at 4 p.m. on Dec. 21.

Interested choral groups are invited to call Kata Gonzaga at 926-4361.

Jeffrey Jeturian megs Seiko's MMFF entry

By Andy P. Bais

SEIKO Films must really be hell-bent on making its presence felt in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival: Robbie Tan, the studio's top honcho, has secured the service of critically-acclaimed director Jeffrey Jeturian to meg "Bridal Shower," his outfit's filmfest entry.

Choosy

Jeffrey has been known to be choosy when it comes to accepting directorial assignments. This is the reason why it took him two years to find a follow-up to his award-winning film, "Tuhog," a satire on exploitation in show business.

After watching "Tuhog," Robbie became a Jeffrey believer and has since wanted him to do a film for Seiko. "We constantly met, *kaya lang laging nagpi*-fizzle-out *ang mga* project," Jeffrey shares.

Last January, they sat down again to conceptualize. The result was "Bridal Shower."

The film, written by Palanca award winner Chris Martinez with script supervisor Armando Lao, revolves around three women looking for fulfillment in their relationships. The film stars Dina Bonnevie, Cherrie Pie Picache and Seiko's latest nymphet, Francine Prieto. They play advertising executives with love problems.

"Bridal Shower" looks like a romantic film, but in reality it is anti-romance, says Jeffrey. "The film pokes fun at our preoccupation with romance."

Sexually promiscuous

Dina plays a sexually promiscuous woman who is in love with a married man whose marriage is in the process of annulment.

Cherrie Pie, on the other hand, is insecure about her looks—she's fat and plain-looking, and resorts to the Internet to find the man of her dreams. She falls for a macho dancer who sweet-talks her into lending him a large amount of money.

Francine gets pregnant but doesn't know who the father is. She must choose between her two lovers, a struggling painter and a wealthy businessman. She opts for the latter for a more secure life.

The movie is a sex comedy with light dramatic touches.

"Bridal Shower" is quite a departure from the past movies of Seiko. "The fact that he got me, plus Dina and Cherrie Pie, means Robbie knew that the film was not going to look like the usual Seiko movie," Jeffrey grins.

JETURIAN. First attempt at comedy.

The director is upbeat about his film. "This is my first attempt at comedy and I am pleased with the result," he says.

Past films

His past films are considered non-commercial, but he believes otherwise. "If your movie has a good story and you tell it well, it's commercial. The stories of my previous films and 'Bridal Shower' are accessible. It's just that, apart from the story, *may* narration *ang* movie. So maybe, in that sense, *nagiging* serious *ang* movies *ko*," he explains.

"It was a joy working with Dina and Cherrie Pie because they are good actresses. They will give other actresses a run for the trophies come awards night," he enthuses.

From the ranks

Jeffrey, a broadcast communications graduate from UP, started as part of Marilou Diaz-Abaya's staff. He rose from the ranks, working as production assistant, script continuity writer, art director and production designer for TV and the movies. "So, by the time I got my break to direct my first *pito-pito* film, 'Sana Pag-ibig Na,' I was ready, even if the conditions were restricting," he recalls.

He dreamed of becoming a movie director after watching Lino Brocka's "Maynila, Sa Mga Kuko Ng Liwanag" when he was in high school. "Masyado akong *na*-touch *sa* movie *na yun*. I thought, if movies have this power over people, then I want to be a director! *Gusto ko ring maka*-affect *sa pananaw at buhay ng mga tao*," he confesses.

"Bridal Shower," also features Rodel Velayo, Christian Vasquez and newcomers Douglas Robinson, Juancho Valentino and Alfred Vargas, along with Boots Anson-Roa and Gina Pareño.

Daily thanksgiving

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

THANKSGIVING is not just a holiday or a seasonal event. It is a daily experience for one who is truly grateful for the blessings that come his way.

Humility

Where does thankfulness come from? My teacher explains that we experience "thankfulness" when we have humility: "I am fallen, I am sinful—devoid of real love for the Supreme Being. I don't deserve His mercy."

An arrogant person thinks differently: "I am a good person who deserves more blessings in life. I am worthy because I give so much. Why is He not giving me what I ask for?"

A thankful person appreciates the opportunities showered on him. He treasures the blessings he receives.

Great effort

He takes great effort not to squander the gifts he has received.

From thankfulness comes the determination to take care of opportunities received. We see the great value of what we have, and use it to serve God and His children.

The fact that we are suffering in this world is a clear symptom of our desire not to surrender to God, not to do His will, and not to follow His instructions.

Selfish desire

It is the manifestation of our selfish desire. Only when we experience humility can we feel gratitude for the Supreme Friend who invites us back home to His world. This material dimension is a rehabilitation center for those who are addicted to the idea of being "lord." Instead of living as God's servant, we want to be controller and master of our existence. We try to bring others under our control.

Thankfulness can be experienced on a daily basis when we feel humble and grateful. If we remain arrogant, we end up frustrated, bitter and lonely, struggling in this ocean of material suffering. We should cultivate thankfulness in our hearts.

Email lotuspond108@hotmail.com

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM DEC 13 - DEC 19

CH	2	4	5	7	9	11	23	25	29
	6:00 Star in A Million 6:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 8:30 Home Along da Airport 9:00 Victim 9:30 Buttercup 10:30 Kontrobersyal 11:30 "F" 12:00 Sports Unlimited	7:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 8:00 The Working President 9:00 To be Announced	7:00 Sailormoon Sailor Stars 7:30 Mirror, Mirror 8:00 Wow Mali! 9:00 Viva Box Office 11:00 Go For Gold	6:00 Search for a Star 7:00 Imbestigador 8:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 9:30 Kakabakaba Adventures 10:30 Celebrity Turns 11:30 Flash Report 12:00 Master Showman	6:00 Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo 7:00 7 Days 8:00 John Doe 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse 11:00 PGMA	6:00 TV for a Cause 7:00 Lakbay TV 8:00 Amazing Twins 9:00 Vatican Christmas 11:00 Iyo ang Kalarungan	6:00 Baywatch 7:00 Game Plan 7:30 The Amazing Race 8:30 Boston Public 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:30 Reel Deel	6:00 Agila Reports 6:30 Screen Savers 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Car Guys 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras Ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling
	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Tanging Ina 9:30 Sunday Family Cinema 11:30 Dong Puno Tonight 12:00 The Weekend News	6:00 PBA First Filipino cup 9:00 The Working President 10:00 Concert of Various Artist	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guylerd 7:00 Ispup alpb. 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 Viva Cine Idols 11:00 Speed	5:30 Partners Mel & Jay 7:00 Kl 8:30 Daddy Di Do Du 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Smack Down Wrestling 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 May Puso ang Batas 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Jazz in Time* 11:00 A Second Look	7:00 2003 Worldpool Master 9:00 Sinemaks 11:00 Driven Show 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Jimmy Neutron 6:30 Futurama 7:00 Exposed 8:00 Yes Dear 8:30 Spin City 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 The Bachelor 10:30 Digital Tour	6:00 Captured 6:30 Fresh Gear 7:00 Convergence 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 New Yankee Workshop 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Ang Iglesia ni Cristo	7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night movies
	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Next Level Na, Game K N B? 7:30 Basta't Kasama Kita 8:00 Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas 8:30 It Might Be You 9:00 OK Fine! Whatever 11:00 Insider 11:30 The Correspondents	6:00 Concert at the Park 7:00 Strangebrew 7:30 In the Raw 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 Family Rosary Crusade 11:00 Auto Focus	6:00 F 6:30 Balitang-Balita 7:00 Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 That 70s Show 9:00 On Air 9:30 Misadventures of Maverick and Ariel 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Mad TV	6:15 Frontpage 7:00 Extra Challenge 7:30 Twin Hearts 8:00 Endless Love II 8:30 Starstruck 9:00 Narito Ang Puso Ko 9:30 Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita 11:00 Saksi 11:30 I-Witness	6:00 Invader Zim 6:30 Entertainment Tonight 7:00 Just for Laffs 8:00 Jag 9:00 The Agency 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sex & the City 11:00 OPTV	7:00 NBA 9:30 In This Corner 10:30 IBC News Tonite 11:00 Linawin Natin	6:00 Beast Machines 6:30 Godzilla 7:00 Batman 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Birds of Prey 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Travel Time	6:00 Net 25 Report 6:30 World Report Filipino Edition 7:00 Openline 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Convergence 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan
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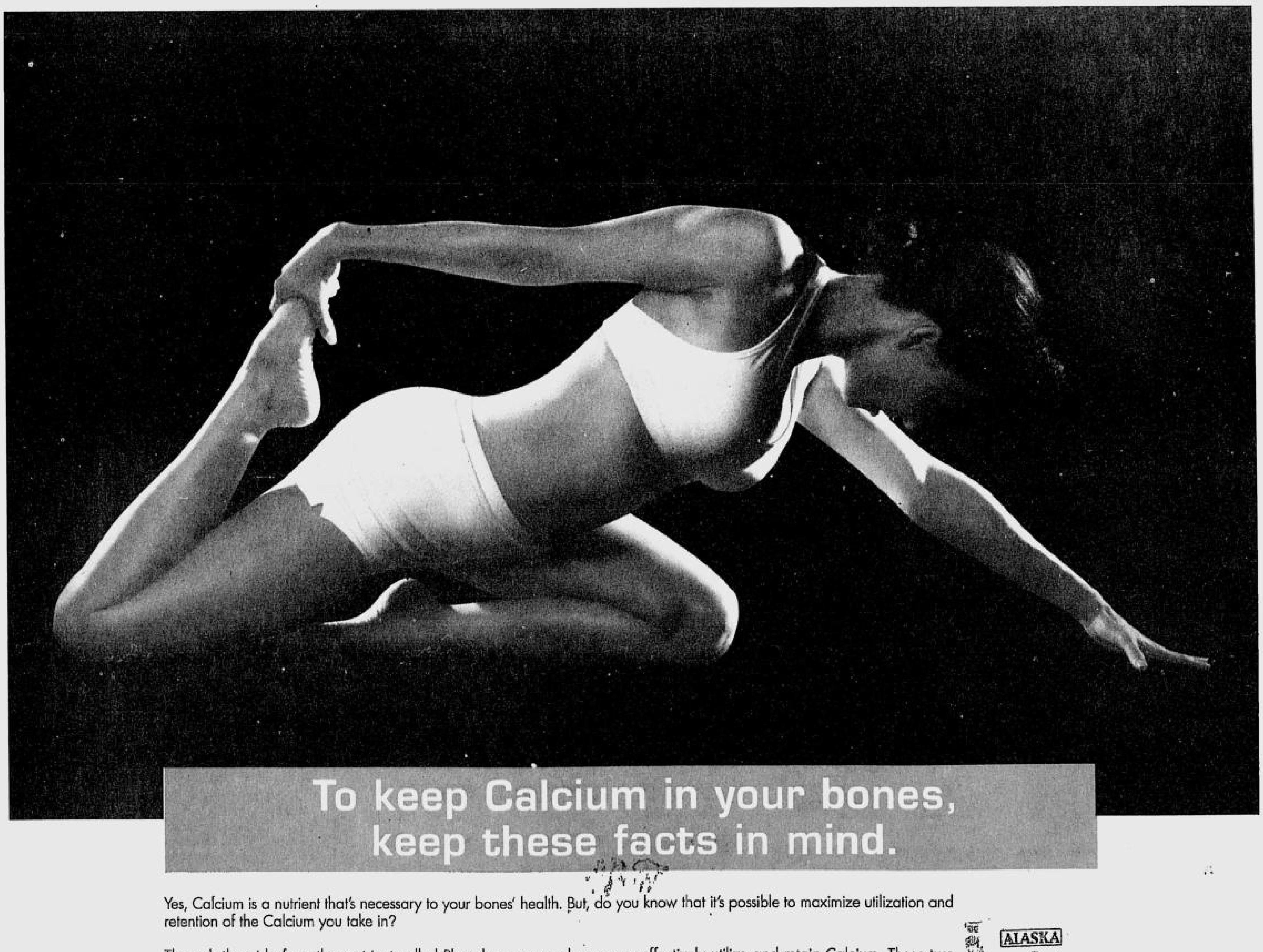

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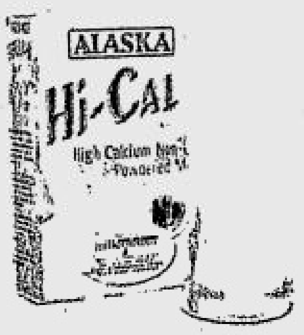

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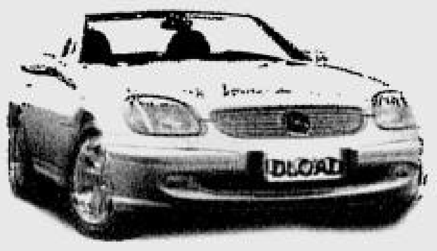

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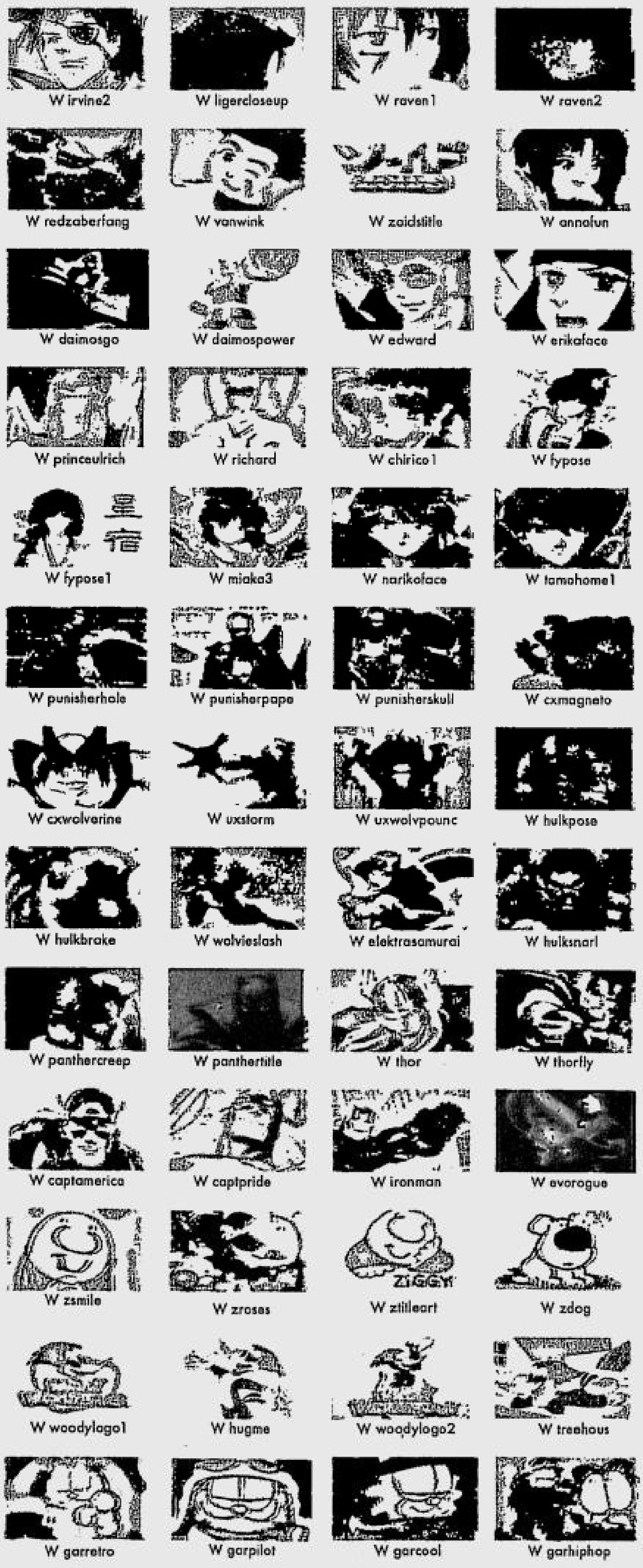

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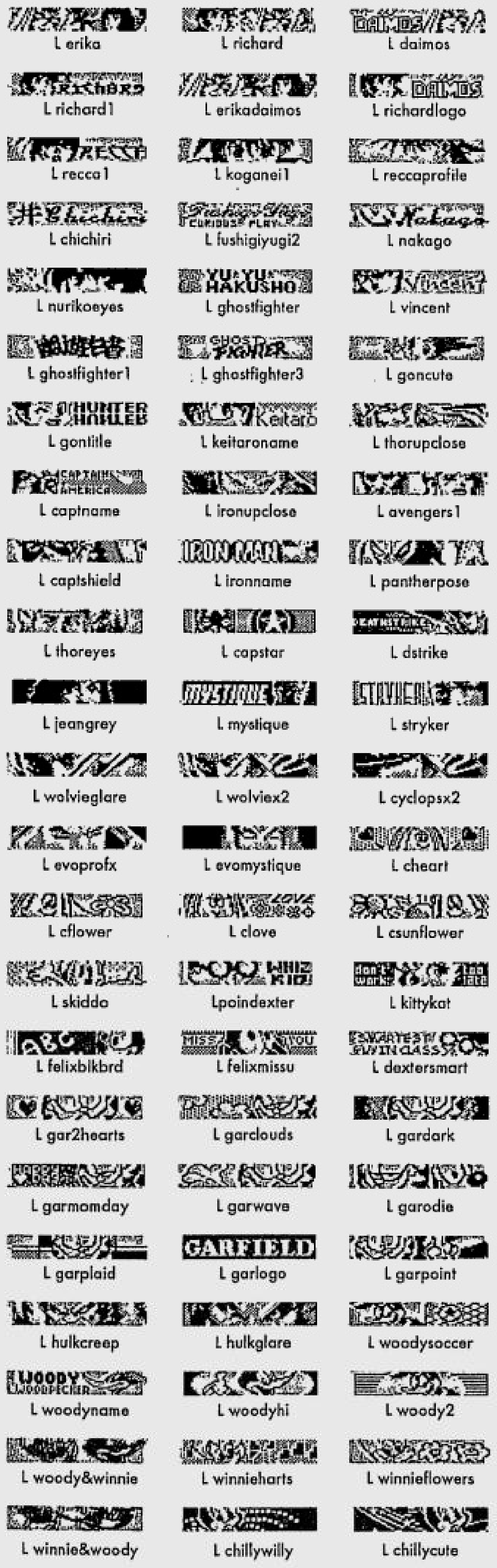

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2003

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SATURDAY Super Special

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Kawaii Five-o page K2

Jingle Jangle page L1

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Return of the Pinoy Superhero page N4

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Sweetened dreams

“Dreams are at once fruit and outcry against an atrophy of the senses” -Jim Morrison

OUT THE WINDOW

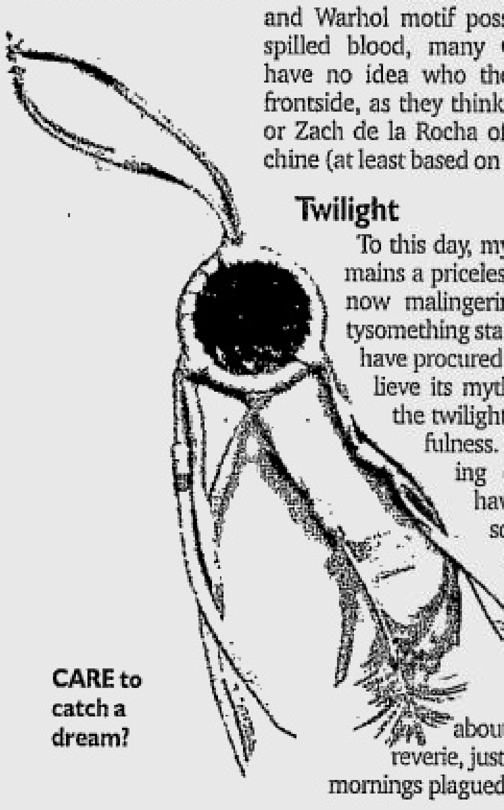
Tals Diaz

"Dreams are at once fruit and outcry against an atrophy of the senses"
-Jim Morrison

At the headboard of my bed hangs one of my most precious treasures in life: an authentic, aged little Dreamcatcher.

It is a small, funky little curiosity—feathers and colored beads hang loosely on strips of old leather, attached to a ring encircling a webbed pattern. I found it ages ago in an obscure little shop amidst the red sands and bloodstained peaks of Sedona in Arizona. The shop sold original, handmade Native American artifacts. More than the fact that it was a kitschy little curio, what thrilled me was the little Indian myth inscribed on the piece of cardboard attached to it. According to Indian legend, dreamcatchers ensnare nightmares in its netted center to protect the dreamer, preventing rude awakenings and preserving the sanctity of slumber. My hyper-imaginative, wonderstruck 12-year-old heart leapt out of its ribcage and I snatched up the beautiful bibelot. I felt as if I held gold in my hands. Back in the sanctuary of my sweet home, I hung it over my bed and it has never once left my headboard for more than 15 years.

Imagine my surprise, when, more than a decade later, I started seeing my precious little dreamcatcher peddled everywhere, from inner city bazaars to *tiangges* in Greenhills to souvenir shops in Boracay. Now they come in in all sizes and bauble permutations, from giant wall decor to necklaces to earrings. I always feel a little acidic kick inside, especially since my beloved, archaic treasure that predicated an indefinable sacredness now dangled on the earlobes of trendy chicks in the city. Perhaps this is how Buddhists feel when they see statues or severed heads of their sacred god adorning the walls of posh restaurants, bars and private living rooms, simply because, well, ignoring the doctrine behind the hallowed image is an exquisite piece of art. Maybe even staunch followers of the Cuban revolutionary, Che Guevarra, get that not-so-fresh-feeling when they see the profile of their hero emblazoned on T-shirts in every color, size and Warhol motif possible. To add in-salt to spilled blood, many Che-adorned urbanites have no idea who they're wearing on their frontside, as they think he's either Bob Marley or Zach de la Rocha of Rage Against the Machine (at least based on my personal survey).

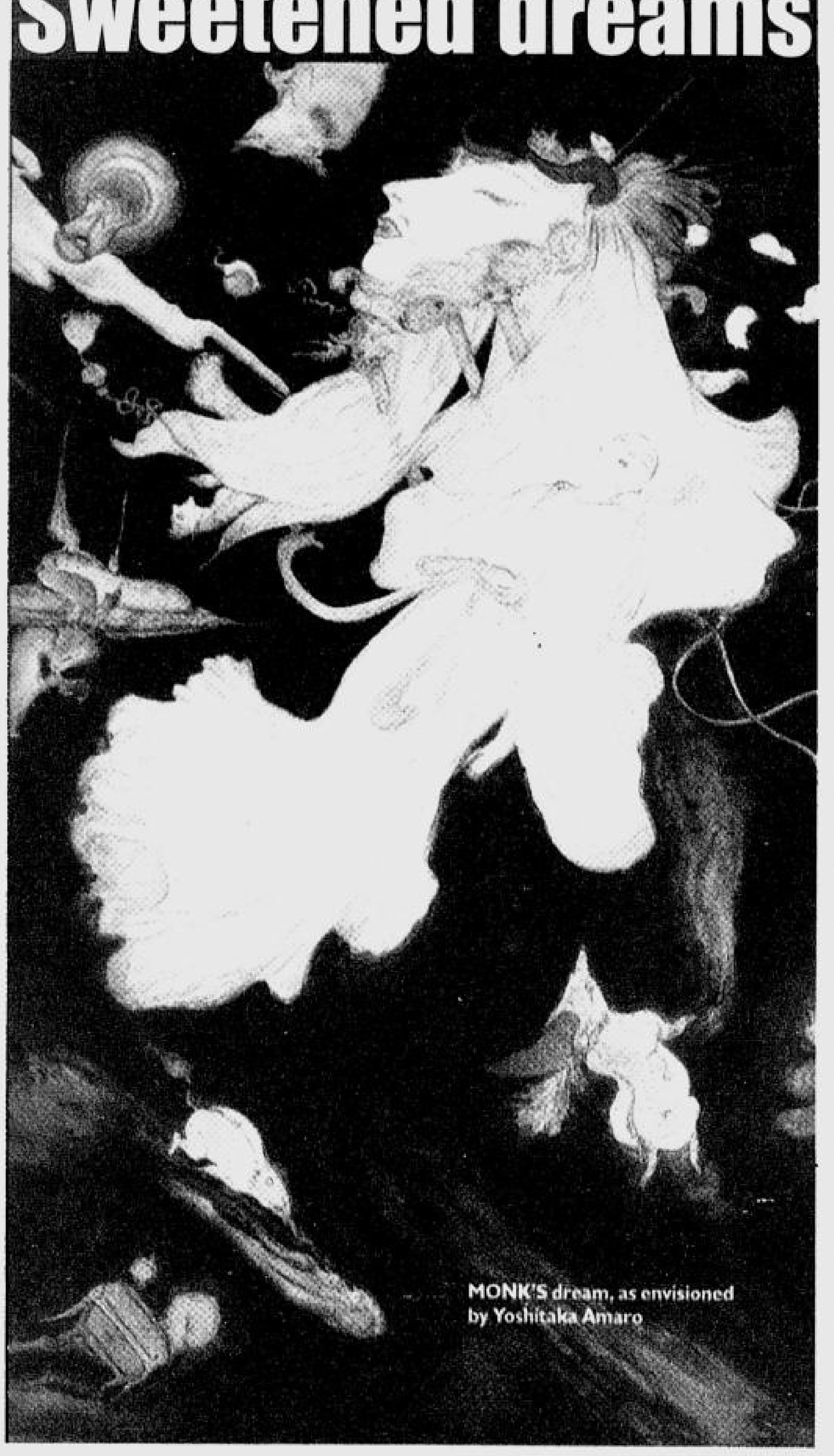


CARE to catch a dream?

Twilight

To this day, my little dreamcatcher remains a priceless treasure, even as I am now malingering away in the twentysomething state. In all the years since I have procured that dreamcatcher, I believe its myth had woven itself into the twilight of my sleep and wakefulness. Thus, anything involving dreams and dreaming have become an endless source of fascination for me.

On a shallow level, my friends and carpool mates of long ago used to bug me to tell them about my previous night's reverie, just to keep them awake on mornings plagued with maddening traffic.



MONK'S dream, as envisioned by Yoshitaka Amaro

Even to this day, I entertain people with narrations of absolutely absurd, preposterous dreams, like swimming in primordial seas infested with bright purple jellyfish. Or standing at the precipice of a planet-sized black pearl to meet the universe's Silver Queen of Fortune playing *pusoy dos*. Or riding a black stallion jumping over gleaming piles of scissors. And what has got to be my most favorite dream by far, sharing a McDonald's Happy Meal on my couch with my *barkada* of Johnny Depp, Gael Garcia Bernal and Ed Norton.

Though I am no professional dream interpreter, I do take pleasure in listening to others' dreams and indulging them when they ask me for interpretations. I have stacks of dream books that attempt to explain recurring symbols. I shamelessly refer to the theories of Carl Jung, who posited that images in dreams symbolized unexplored parts of our psyches. He suggested looking for connections between the images in experiences and thoughts in real life. For those considering a career in dream interpretation, I suggest avoiding Freud, for that guy believed everything was all about repressed sexual desires.

Dreamstuff

I once watched an independent movie by a local film director in a favorite haunt of mine within the old walls of Intramuros, Sanctum Unmasct, a.k.a. creative conference space of indie quirks everywhere. The film was about two lovers who had never met in real life, and yet continue to meet each other in a beach of their dreams. An unforgettable scene for me was when the two lovers, naked and alone, faced an aquamarine sea, talking about escape. That particular scene gave me more bumps on my arms than the cliffside roads on the way to Sagada. It was so *real* to me, for most of my long lost friendships and past loves bounded by physical space and unforgiving time find a rendezvous within the realm of my dreams. Old times and laughter shared with my late father are likewise resurrected in my reveries. That is when I truly understand the age-old cliché, “sweet dreams,”—it is the sweetness of magical encounters unbounded by real-time logic. This is also why my farewells to friends whom I may never see again are often expressed with my own term of endearment: “I'll see you in my dreams, baby.”

The Sandman cometh

My endless wonder for the dreaming is perhaps the reason I am absolutely enamored by Neil Gaiman's character of the Sandman or the Dream King. As a reticent, goth-like sketch, I truly believe in the Sandman's existence in my nightlife, because many times I draw inspiration from within the crepuscule of the dream kingdom. Some of my most vivid dreams end up as paintings in my room in an attempt to revel in the transient visions. I once dreamt of a woman with flowing, purple hair looking out from a diamond-shaped window at a bright orange sun encircling the branches of a lone tree inhabiting a small island. I painted that on canvas, and it is what I stare at every night before sleep lulls me to my favorite destination.

I also thank the Dream King for gifting me with story ideas channeled into plays, fiction, and um ... some crappy poetry. I found it so fitting that in one of Gaiman's final stories in the Sandman series, “The Wake,” the scribes William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe made a little deal with Dream for story inspirations, for the small price of an original story offered back to him. In the fictionalized account, “The Tempest” was Shakespeare's final bequest to the Sandman for a lifetime of illumination.

Outside the world of fantasy, dreams were likewise catalysts for some classic legacies in science and fiction. "Frankenstein" was a collage of the author Mary Shelley's fragmented dreams. The Periodic Table of Elements, that nightmare I had to endure in Chem class, also came to Dmitri Mendeleev in a dream.

Dream logic

Thus, I highly recommend reveling in that magical realm, which to this day, the scientific community cannot fully explain. A few humble suggestions from this crazed little dreamer: scribble the fragments of your visions on pieces of paper or journal by your bedside. Take no heed of logic, and even try to recapture shapes, colors, textures and sensations. Take note of patterns and by all means, make some effort in unlocking their meaning in your life. A little bittersweet thought, though: it's been proven that eating chocolate before bedtime causes nightmares and violent thrashing among certain sleepyheads (so much for “sweet” dreams, huh?).

To end this dreamy discourse, I'd like to share something I picked up from my Latino friends at every concluded night of drinking and partying: “*Que tengan dulces sueños, amigos.*” Have sweet dreams, my friends. Until that cursed alarm clock summons you back to the waking world.

(E-mail the author at: inca_orange@yahoo.com)

Kawaii Five-0

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

FOR some reason, the first thing that springs to mind when I hear the word “kitsch” is Japan. Despite the unquestionable wealth of its traditions and the yummy fried oyster sushi, I can't get past the excruciatingly kawaii—or cute—disposition that typifies Japanese pop culture today. Since the close Canadian buds I wanted to consult only had one parent of pure Japanese extraction (my friend Aaron's DNA was 100 percent Japanese but he was born and raised in Brazil), I resorted to amateur philosophizing. Like something straight out of a Kevin Smith movie, I chanced upon a workable hypothesis while on the northbound line of the C-Train.

“You guys aren't very popular back in Asia, aren't you? I mean, after the war and all,” a redneck dude nonchalantly asked me.

Stumped, all I could muster was a Scooby Doo-ish “Er?” My mind was marshalling up a world of reasons.

“Don't get me wrong. I'm a big fan of your World War II aircraft. I even wanna get a Japanese tattoo right here on my arm!” Before I could pick my jaw up from the floor and shoot something back, he got off at Lions Park Station. Mildly befuddled, I tried gazing at the magnificent Bow River through the filmy window, but saw my reflection instead. That's when it hit me. The bonehead Kid Rock clone thought I was Japanese!

Looking back, I sort of sensed where that came from. The Japanese fled their homeland and sought refuge in countries like Brazil and Canada after the Asia Pacific War. According to my friends, some of their grandparents even lived in exile in Lethbridge, Alberta and were forbidden to leave the city until the 1960s. This was just south of Calgary, the place I called home. Given the backlash that Japan faced after Pearl Harbor, I plucked a theory straight from the left field: Are the Japanese using the kawaii-ness of their pop culture to U-turn from a brutal wartime past? Does the Land of the Rising Sun want to be repackaged as Kitsch Country?

Engrish

I recently came upon a newish episode of “Friends” on the WOWOW channel. It was a downer, however, since it was dubbed in Japanese. To my untrained senses, the whole show looked and sounded as if only one person was delivering all the lines. Since I was apparently not part of this network's target audience, I couldn't imagine who would find this appealing. I had gone to Tokyo Disneyland as a hyperactive six-year-old, and it was disturbing to see a familiar character like Donald Duck speaking in the alien voice of Mr. Miyagi.

This in-your-face senselessness is also obvious in Japanese pop music, or J-pop. Interspersing random English words like “flower,” “heartbeat,” and “hamburger” with Japanese lyrics, J-pop superstars like Utada Hikaru and Namie Amuro command legions of google-eyed fans like Hitlers with frosted lips. In turn, the largely teenage audience waves glow sticks left-to-right like darling windshield wipers. Japanese youth seem to have a knack for expressing themselves robotically.

To shock rigid salarymen, teens in Shibuya, a popular entertainment district, take fashion to tacky extremes with sky-high platforms and cheaply constructed clothing. Kids in Camden or Brooklyn can make this trashy look desirable with an attitude of indifference and detachment, but Shibuya scenesters possess a certain desperation that makes them look empty instead of cool. The relentless pursuit of materialism likewise pushes high school girls to work multiple jobs in order to snag a $1,000 bag, which is obviously way beyond their means. It seems anything and everything with a luxury logo enthralls most Japanese shoppers, revealing a sense of style that's based on price, shock value, and escapism.

New agenda

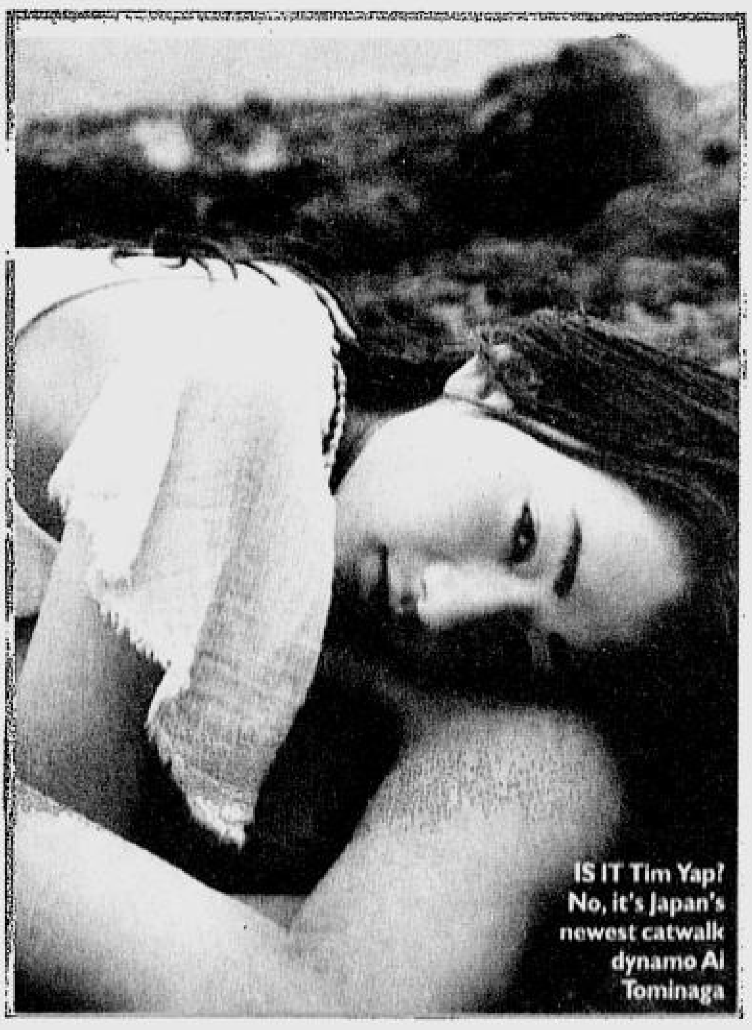
But away from the bad teeth, California lifeguard tans, and disposability of kawaii culture, a distinct section of Young Japan is shaking things up with a sleeker identity. With striking feline features and legs sprouting out of her armpits, Ai Tominaga is the latest catwalk dynamo to come out of Japan. High-voltage megabrands like Gucci and Louis Vuitton are addicted to her atypical Oriental beauty, which could be serene one moment and sexed-up the next.

After design gods Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo, Jun Takahashi and his label Undercover are hustling up the realm of wearable art with hugely covetable street fashion. Grungy but achingly hip and playful, Undercover melds contrasting elements—like ethnic themes, gothic undertones, and unpredictable materials—to come up with revolutionary but sensible garments.

DJ Krush and Denki Groove saved my soul with their totally mad stack of electronic beats in the late 1990s. Now slightly mellower, the musical sushi continues to roll out of Japan through New York expat Miho Hatori, whose former alliances include Cibo Matto and Gorillaz. With partner Smokey Hormel, Smokey & Miho play a refreshing brand of neo bossa nova. By singing in Japanese, Portuguese, and English on their recently self-released EPs “Tempo de Amor” and “Smokey & Miho,” the duo explores the links between those diverse cultures and tilts toward soulful well-being.

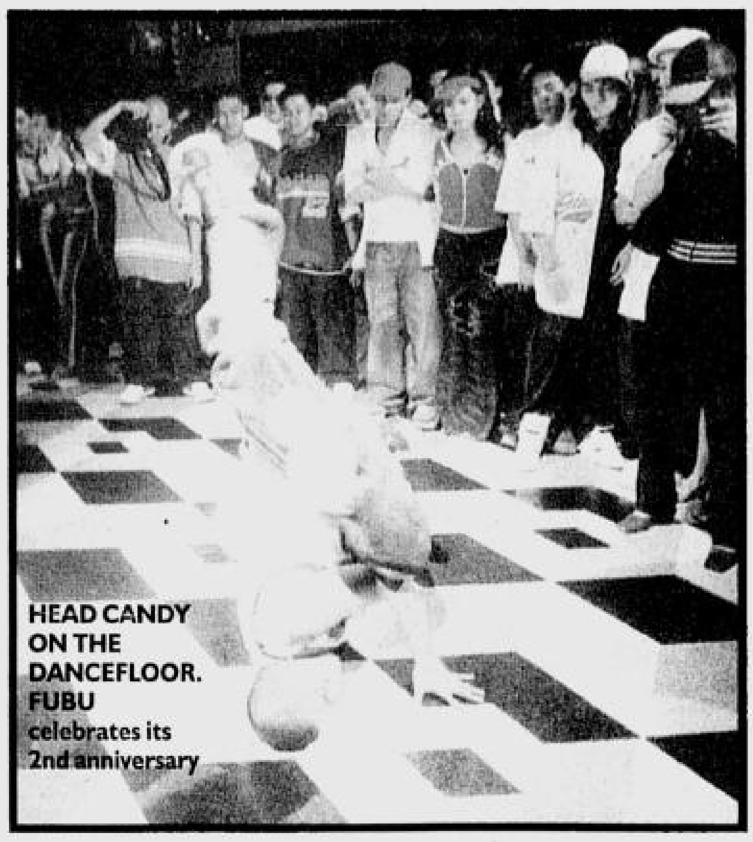
The kids are all right

The overriding concern with appearances among Japanese youth can be seen as a form of drag. American artist Iona Rozeal Brown addresses this through her sensitive-meets-inquisitive masterpieces. Inspired by the ganguro—who would darken their skin to a deep shade of caramel, get Afro perms and rock the Rocawear—she gives traditional Kabuki portraits a large hip-hop makeover. More than breaking new ground in the fickle world of art, this proves that kawaii-ness could be more than a Band-Aid for the horrors inflicted by the Japanese Imperial Army. When viewed through the proper lens, the cloying cuteness could be Young Japan's way of searching for its soul in an age that's so dissociated from the fundamental teachings of Zen Buddhism. If you'd care to indulge this nonprofessional explanation, then the kids in Shibuya may be on to something more meaningful. Supposing the path to enlightenment is strewn with absurd lyrics, rainbow-colored hair, and trademark kitsch, there's no doubt that Japan is okay. At the rate they're going, I think they're quite all right.



IS IT Tim Yap? No, it's Japan's newest catwalk dynamo Ai Tominaga

Supposing the path to enlightenment is strewn with absurd lyrics, rainbow-colored hair, and trademark kitsch, there's no doubt that Japan is okay

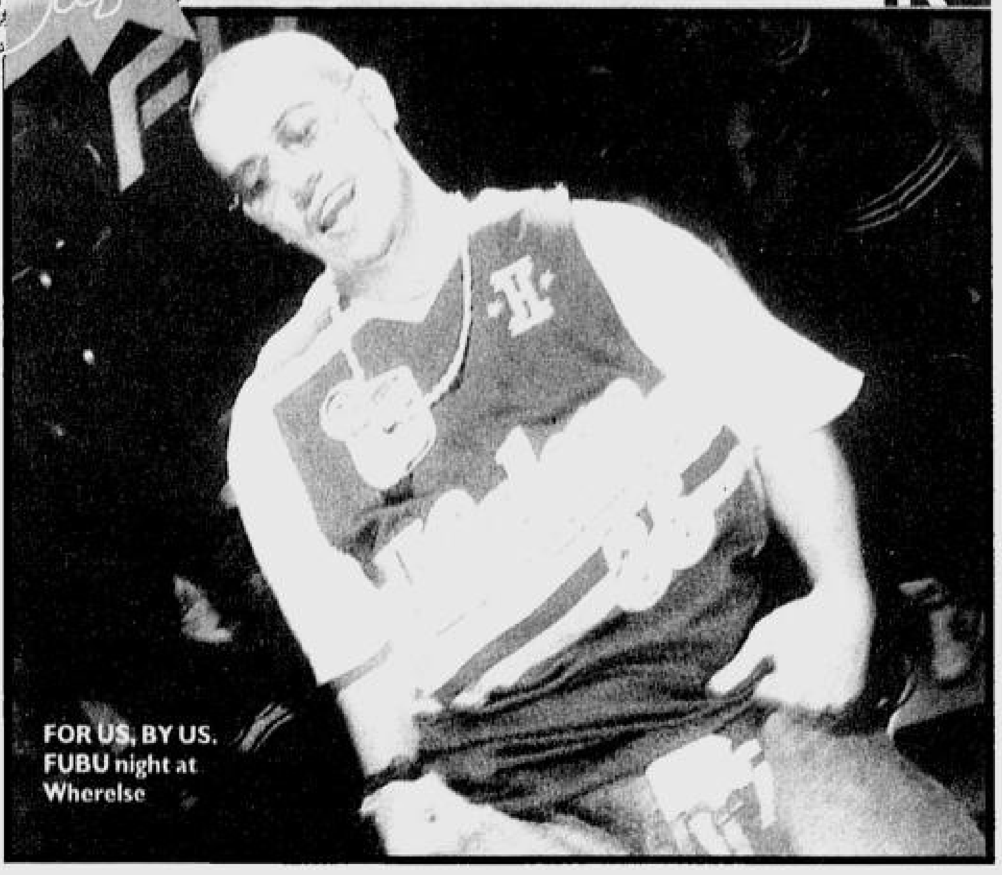


HEAD CANDY ON THE DANCEFLOOR. FUBU celebrates its 2nd anniversary

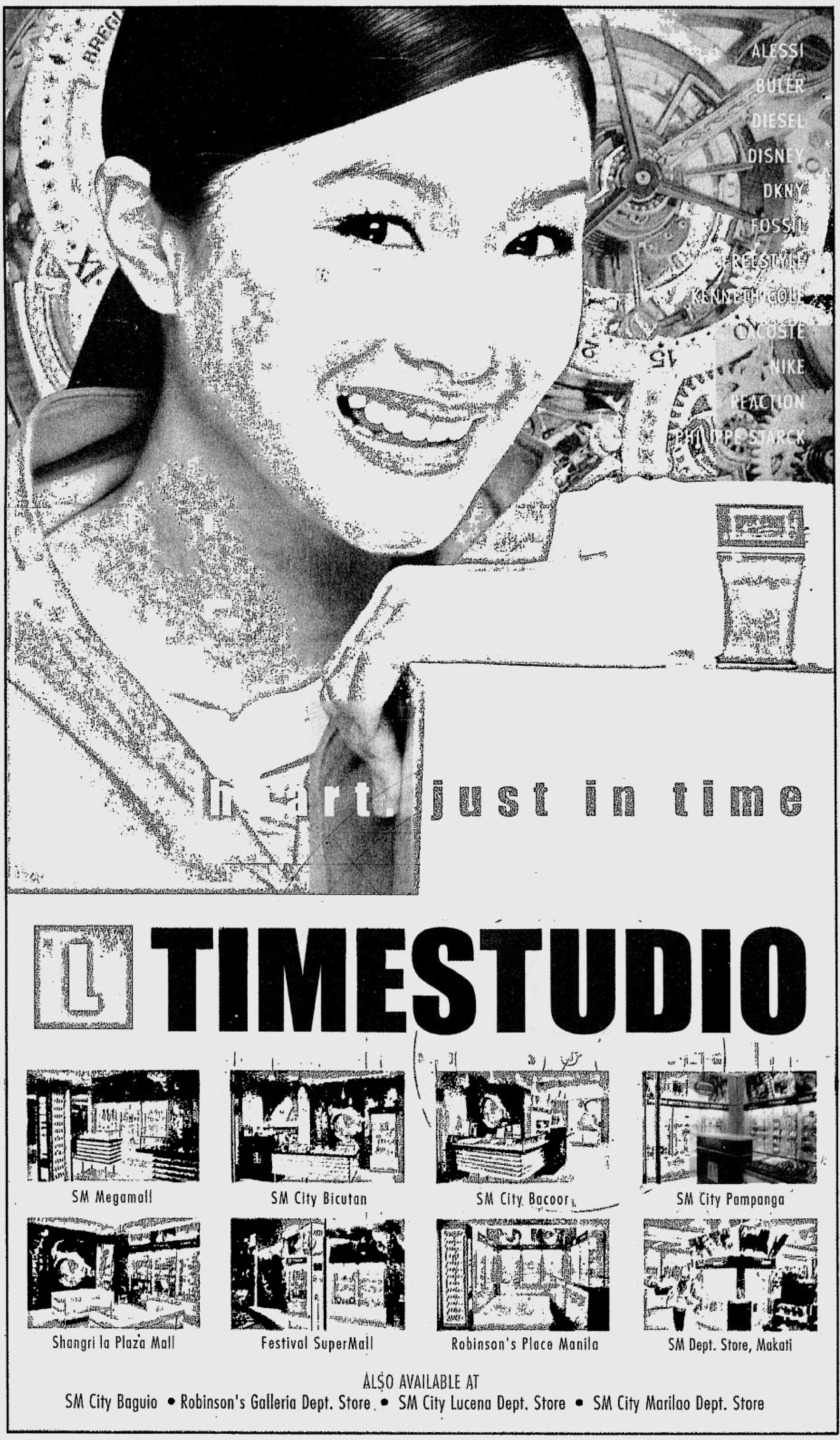
Ready for a head spin?

WHERELSE? got a taste of pure hip hop and R&B when FUBU (For Us, By Us) celebrated its second anniversary last Nov. 26. The shindig, hosted by Dash, featured the Turntable Thugs—DJ Arbie, DJ Paul and DJ Gugoo—who spiced up the dance floor with their turntables that churned out body-shaking urban beats, before rapper Gloc 9 took the spotlight.

By midnight, things started to get hotter as girls joined in the first ever Pole Dancing Contest, followed by a wet t-shirt competition.
Maui V. Reyes



FOR US, BY US. FUBU night at Wherelse



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Heart Beats in Time

L Timestudio signs up pop jewel Heart Evangelista to be the face for trendy timepieces.

Riding high on the success of her recent movie, *My First Romance* and an Awit Award recognition, singer, Myx VJ and ABS-CBN Talent Center jewel Heart Evangelista recently signed up to be the official endorser for L Timestudio, the newest watch chain in town. Handpicked among local young stars, Heart triumphs with her winning smile and effervescent personality.

A unique concept store from The Lucerne Group, L Timestudio represents that which is hip, hot, and trendy when it comes to shopping for watches. The chain sets its sights on evolving with the present consumer mindset of lifestyle shopping, with emphasis on Fashion, Sports and Technology-centered pieces. Catering to a young, fashion-conscious market, L .Timestudio houses a wide array for shoppers looking for the right watch to match their individual styles and personalities. And just like Heart's friendly and relaxed character, freestanding shops have a fresh and casual atmosphere with hip music, comfy couches and modern interiors.

Anchored by industry giants Fossil and Nike, L Timestudio also carries Kenneth Cole, DKNY, Diesel, Lacoste, Reaction, Philippe Starck, Alessi, Buler and Freestyle watches. From the most fashion forward brands to the most high tech innovations, L Timestudio highlights each brand character in murals, identity colors and point-of-purchase materials. In the coming months, the familiar face of Heart Evangelista will embody the face of time.

The L Timestudio flagship store is located at the Shangri-la Plaza Mall, with shops in other leading shopping malls.

Shops
Level 2, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
3/F SM Megamall Bldg. B
Festival Supermall
SM City Pampanga
SM City Bacoor
SM City Bicutan
SM City Baguio

Shop-In-Shops
SM Department Store Makati
SM Department Store Marilao
Robinson's Department Store Galleria
Robinson's Department Store Ermita

AFTER HOURS AFTER HOURS AFTER HO

Compiled by Adrian Cuenca

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13:

Teakbar, Power Plant, Rockwell: Hypnotiq Saturdays (deep & funky house tunes) with TC, Mark Naval and Erwin Edralin

Nuvo: Electrolounge with Scrambled Edge and Don Renato (jazz, Brasilia and broken beat)

Acquario: Erwin Edralin & Patch (deep & funky house)

Dreambar: Circo Loco with Manolet Dario (House, Progressive house)

Temple: Martin Pulgar (house)

Absinth: Pump with Joe Henzon & Carlo Ching (tech-house)

Tiananmen Bar and Resto: Couch Culture by Couch Lab (chill Out, balearic)

Wasabi: Saturd80's, New wave and dance music from the era with DJ Luis and DJ Jojo

Fidel: Velvet Mafia with Cocoy Puyat, Bingo Ang and Patch (deep sophisticated house)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16:

Temple: Goodlife Tuesdays with Steve Mills (R&B)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17:

Absinth: Smooth Wednesdays with Steve Mills (R&B, hip hop)

Bora Bar: Manolet Dario (progressive house)

Bed Bar, Libis: DJ Luis (new wave)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18:

Temple: Yin Yang, a sonic fusion of R&B and House music with Kevin Ruiz.

Azzurro: Plush Thursdays with Steve Mills (R&B)

Bykes Cafe: DJ Luis (retro '70s to '90s)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19:

Restaurant 12: 12 after 12 with Chip de la Calzada (sexy, deep house and lounge) & Adrian Cuenca (chill, electro lounge)

Bora Bar: Roman Mojica (UK Vocal house)

Absinth: Singles Unite with Manolet Dario (progressive house, house)

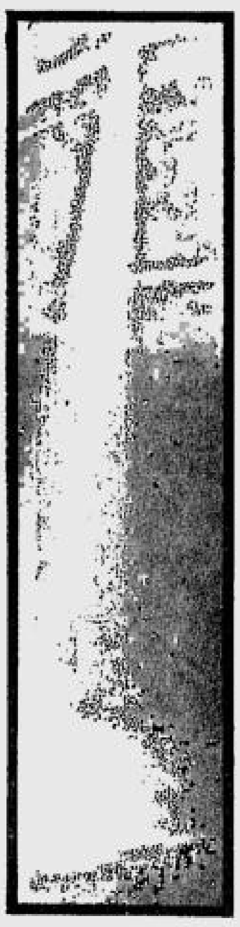
Dreambar: Decadance with Boyet Almazan ('80s and '90s)

Wasabi: Vibe Fridays with Steve Mills (r&b)

Acquario: Erwin Edralin (Deep & funky house).

Tiananmen Bar and Resto: Couch Culture by Couch Lab (Chill Out, Balearic)

For your gigs to be published email adrian@dj-conspiracy.com by Wednesday afternoon.



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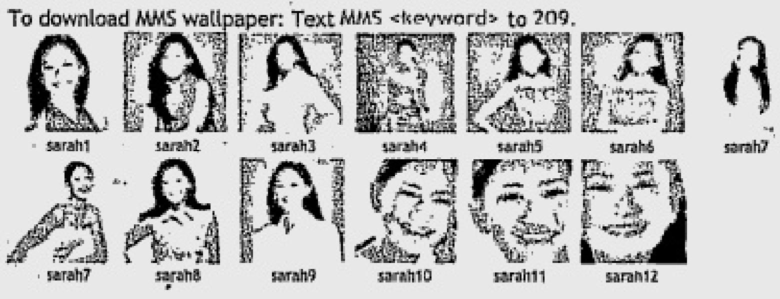


Celebrate the longest Christmas with the longest hours.

Date	Time	Day	EK Day Pass Rate	Fireworks Display
Dec. 1-14	10 am to 7 pm	Wed. to Fri.	₱400	
	10 am to 10 pm	Sat. & Sun.	₱500	9 pm
Dec. 15-19	10 am to 10 pm	Mon. to Fri.	₱500	
Dec. 20-Jan. 4	10 am to 12 mn	Mon. to Sun.	₱500	10 pm
Dec. 24 & 31	10 am to 7 pm	Wed.	₱500	7 pm

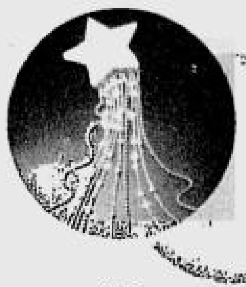
Enchanted Kingdom

Feel the magic of the season.

Other available tickets are Carousel Special at ₱100 and Wizard's Treat at ₱300. For inquiries, please call 8302111 to 16 or 8436073 to 78 or visit www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph

SATURDAY Super

Jingle Jangling!



Tim Yap

DASHING through the show, **Martin Nievera**, star of innumerable Gift Gate campaigns, comes rushing into the white-washed Swatch store hallway that doubled up as *degustacion* lunch venue to launch female Santa's (a.k.a. **Virgie Ramos**) Swatch treats this Yuletide season.

Everyone at the long table is wearing white, majestic and pristine, as the background Christmas carols provide a warm, fuzzy feeling. Marshmallows and candy canes, M&Ms and cookies dominate the kids table—later occupied by **Celine Lopez, Rissa Samson** and Martin himself.

Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski trades Christmas wishes with the guests, as **Tessa Prieto-Valdes**, bows and balls sewed onto her outfit, tries to outshine the giant white Christmas tree. With the shower of prizes that follows her every segment, she deserves the human Christmas tree prize!

It is an intimate gathering of 20 or so scene shakers—artists, supermodels, television and music stars—all Gift Gate babies eager to partake of the Christmas spirit.

Each one gets to wear a Swatch, as Tessa gives away prizes for oldest Swatch, twin Swatch, and other on-the-spot categories that only the Sea Princess can think of. The best prize comes from Tita **Virgie**: When the dessert arrives, waiters open the platter's cover to reveal (gasp) an Impy Pilapil glass sculp-

JINGLE/L2

TERNO TAYO! Swatch girl Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski and Bea Zobel, Jr.

CHRISTMAS IN OUR HEARTS. Anton San Diego jams with Martin Nievera

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

WHY DON'T YOU GIFT GATE ON CHRISTMAS DAY? Virgie Ramos Swatching it

MODEL BELLES. Tweety de Leon-Gonzales and Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

STARMONT STYLE. Raya Mananquil and Celine Lopez

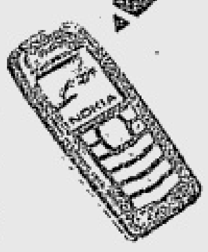
PEPATO pie!

P500
P1,000
P100
Millions in cash and prizes now within your reach!
P100
P1,000
NOKIA
P500
P100
P500
P1,000

Rustan SUPERMARKETS 33rd Anniversary

CashGrab PROMO

2 Ways of Winning!



You can win instantly in the Cash Grab booth!
Or a brand new Toyota Altis
or any of the 10 cellphones in the raffle.

Rustan SUPERMARKETS

Rustan Supermarkets Fresh The People

Xpresslane by Rustan SUPERMARKET

Promo is valid from November 10 to December 28, 2003.

ARIEL Downy head & shoulders SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION Nestlé JACK 'n JILL nissin Century Tuna Supermeat POND'S Colgate HUGGIES Johnson's baby Knorr Lactum ZESTO NIDO mentos GUM PUREFOODS HORMEL

Promo Mechanics

1. Customers will be entitled to a Cash Grab card leaflet upon entry at any Rustan Supermarket. Each customer will get a chance to win a cash reward. The cash grab leaflets are given out for free.
2. Customers will be required to shop for a single or accumulated purchase of P3,000.00. Each purchase value will be validated on the Cash Grab leaflet by an authorized promo attendant using an authenticated security puncher. Purchases are not rounded off to the next hundred peso value.
3. Only leaflets with valid and authenticated security punches will be honored.
4. Leaflets are punched only on the day of purchase and at the branch or outlet where the purchase was made. Completely punched Cash Grab leaflets must be surrendered to an authorized personnel and stamped "claimed" prior to entry in the Cash Grab booth to prevent repeated usage.
5. Customers can play only on the day and at the branch where the Cash Grab leaflet was completely punched.
6. All lost or tampered leaflets shall be deemed disqualified. Customer must meet the required purchase requirement to be able to qualify again.
7. Once the leaflet is completely punched and surrendered, an authorized Rustan Supermarket personnel will assist the customer to the Cash Grab machine to play the game. A maximum of 10 times to play will be entitled to a customer per day should their purchase exceed PhP 30,000.00 in one day.
8. Customer is given thirty (30) seconds per entry to the air-blown Cash Grab machine to catch as many play money (in various denominations) as he/she can.
9. Following are the rules of "cash grab" game;
   a) Only 12 years old and above will be allowed to play inside the Cash Grab machine. A qualified customer may allow a representative to play for them.
   b) Customer must always keep their feet on the footprints during the allotted game time.
   c) They cannot grab any play money below the knees, nor hold/keep the play money in their pockets, clothing or against their chest.
   d) Customer cannot lean against the sides of the machine.
   e) Players may start only when the blower starts and must stop when the machine automatically stops after 30 seconds.
   f) After the time limit is over, only the play money accumulated in the Cash Bin will be valid for counting.
   g) The accumulated play money will be returned back to the machine, for the next customer to play.
   h) Non-compliance of the above rules will disqualify the customer from continuing to play and from winning.

10. Customer will win whatever total amount he/she can grab and accumulate in excess of PhP 3,000.00 instantly in the form of Rustan Supermarket Gift Cheques. However, the excess should not be less than PhP 100.00 otherwise, it will not be counted.
    Example:
    a. Winner grabbed PhP 3,120.00, he/she only wins PhP 120.00
    b. Winner grabbed PhP 4,000.00, he/she only wins PhP 1,000.00
    c. Winner grabbed PhP 3,025.00, he/she only gets a raffle coupon.
11. Winners and non-winners are qualified to join the raffle promo and are also qualified to join the game again and continue participating in the promotion.
12. Combination of cash grab leaflets to come up with the required PhP 3,000.00 worth of purchase will be allowed.
13. All cash prizes exceeding PhP 10,000.00 are tax-paid.
14. All employees of Rustan Supermarkets, Rustan's Fresh and Xxpresslanes, and its advertising agency, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity, are disqualified from joining the promotion.

Raffle Promo

1. Winning and non-winning customers in the game are qualified to join the raffle promotion.
2. All customers who played in the Cash Grab machine are entitled to one (1) raffle coupon. Every one completely punched Cash Grab leaflet is entitled to one raffle coupon.
3. Every P150 worth of purchase of sponsored product entitles the customer to an additional raffle coupon. Customers, however, will only be given an additional raffle coupon if they are able to make the required PhP3,000.00 purchase.
4. Customers should fill-out their name, address, telephone number and affix their signature on the raffle coupon and drop it off in the designated drop boxes.
5. At the end of the promotion, entries from all branches and outlets will be collected to raffle off the following prizes:
   a.) One (1) Toyota Altis Corolla 1.6J M/T
   b.) Ten (10) Nokia cellular phone units, as follows:
      1.) 5-6800 units
      2.) 3-3300 units
      3.) 2-3100 units
6. Car insurance and cellphone lines are not included in the prize.
7. Deadline to drop entries or raffle coupon is on December 28, 2003.
8. Raffle draw will be held on January 7, 2004, 3:00 pm at Rustan Supermarket's Cubao Branch, Araneta Center, Quezon City, and will be witnessed by a DTI Representative.
9. A customer can only win once. If his/her name is drawn more than once, he/she gets to win the higher-priced raffle prize.
10. Rustan Supermarket will pay the 20% tax for prizes exceeding PhP 10,000.00.
11. Winners will be notified by registered mail and must present a valid identification card upon claiming their prize at the following address:
    a. Metro Manila winners- Rustan Supermarket Cubao Branch, Araneta Center, Quezon City
    b. Cebu winners- Rustan Supermarket Cebu Branch, General Maxilom Avenue, Cebu City
12. For Cebu winners, customers will shoulder airfreight cost of vehicle.
13. Redemption period for the raffle prizes shall be within 60 days from the date of notification.
14. Prizes not claimed within 60 days shall be forfeited with prior approval of the DTI-NCR.
15. All employees of Rustan Supermarkets, Rustan's Fresh and Xxpresslanes and its advertising agency, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity, are disqualified from joining the promotion.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3311 Series of 2003

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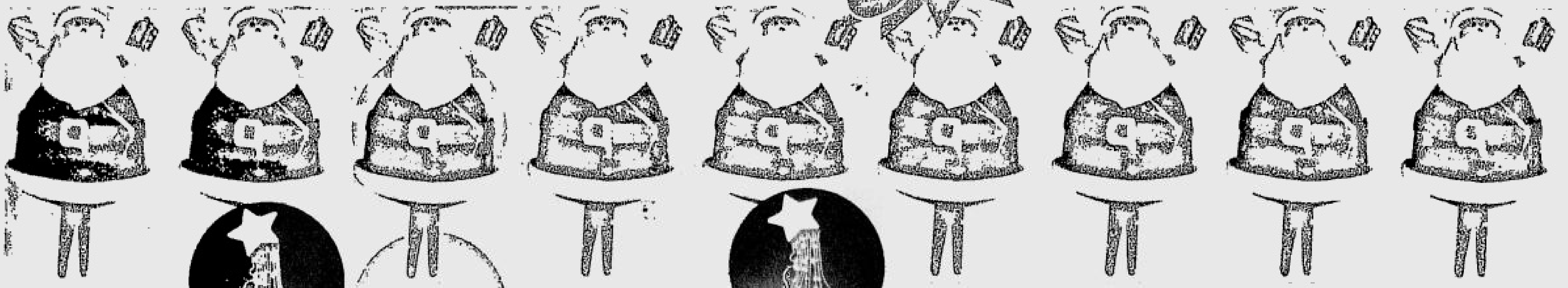


JINGLE TATTLE. Anton San Diego, songbird

CHINA TOWN. China

RIDING REINDEER. Mikee Jaworski, Swatch lady

RATED X MAS. Rachel Alejandro

MR. BIG, Miguel Ramos

"BOOK list, please!" Says Girlie Rodis

Jingle Jangling!

DAWN WE NOW OUR GAY APPAREL. Dawn Zulueta and Chelo Formoso

TIME FOR A SWATCHIN' GOOD TIME. Virgie Ramos plays Santa

Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski trades Christmas wishes with the guests, as Tessa Prieto-Valdes, bows and balls sewed onto her outfit, tries to outshine the giant white Christmas tree

From pageL1

ture! It goes to lucky birthday boy **Anton San Diego**, Tatler editor, who claims to be 22 this year.

Upon Tessa's prodding, Anton gets up and sings a duet with Martin, "The Way You Look Tonight." So in sync are Martin and Anton, that **Maurice Arcache** calls Anton, "Pops San Diego." **Rachel Alejandro** sings as well, and then **Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo**, who is super-blooming these days. Must be the movie bug, what with the movie "Filipinas" coming out soon.

"Do you notice that all Pinoy parties end up as karaoke all-night singalongs?" Tessa asks. She proceeds to show us all her Hello Kitty jewelry under all the layers of boa feathers draped around her body.

Art patroness **Bea Zobel** gets up and joins Martin and Tita Virgie in placing the star atop the Impy Pilapil glass scupture of a tree.

It is not an ordinary star—it is a Starmony, Swatch Bijoux's latest glittering gem. I am predicting that this will soon be on every one's Christmas wish lists.

Meanwhile, **Tweety de Leon-Gonzales** wins a Swatch Christmas number—the special limited-edition (only 30 pieces) Jingle Jangle, which comes with a reindeer toy.

Ho, ho ho!

TINSEL TERNO. Bea Zobel, Jr and Martin Nievera

DESIGN DECOR. Susie and Ed Calma

AGOT YOU, BABE!

CHRISTMAS TREAT. Rissa Samson under the tree

ANGELIC ACE.. Annette Coronel

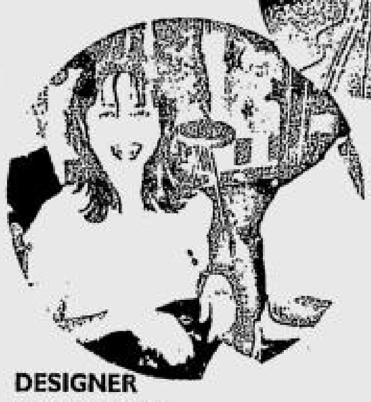
TWELVE DAYS of Christmas rolled into one

SILVER BELLES. Monique Villonco and Sandy Romualdez

TWO KINGS OF THE ORIENT. Maurice Arcache and Pepper Teehankee

MERRY ME! From coffee to Christmas with Celine Lopez

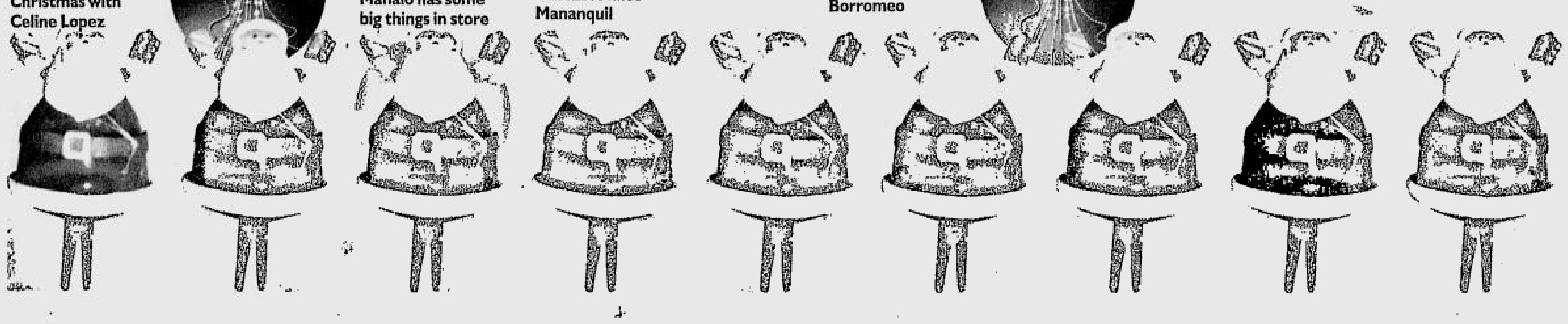
MEET YOU AT THE MET. Ino Manalo has some big things in store


DESIGNER GENES. Millet Mananquil

IMMACULATE IN WHITE. Mia Borromeo

JOYCE Orena to the world

SILENT MIGHT. Anna Buenaventura



What's your sweet addiction?

By Maui V. Reyes

"TARZAN bubblegum! *Kasi* old school *eh*!"
—Mich Dulce, designer

"Sansrival from Sizzling Plate in Baguio."
—Chavi Romowac, Session Road

"Hershey's Reese Sticks. I'm not into peanut butter but it drives me crazy."
—Marc Abaya, guitarist and vocalist of <s>andwich and Kjwan

"Hershey's kisses, it's actually known to be the only chocolate to man that they don't [have to bite into]. I just place it on top of my tongue and let it melt away and take over my mouth. So powerful for such a little chocolate."
—Rico Robles, RX 93.1 DJ

PARE, pa-kheez!

"Stork. *Pwede ba yon?*"
—Jay, vocalist, Kamikazee

"Kiamoy! *Matamis, maasim, pero masarap.* Life is one big kiamoy."
—Ebe Dancel, vocalist and guitarist of Sugarfree

"Truffles. Because it's from heaven."
—Ala Paredes, MYX VJ

"Curly tops, flat tops, chocnut and ovalteenies!"
—Jugs Jugueta, vocalist and guitarist, itchyworms!

"Plain New York baked cheesecake and Marta Matute's chocolate cake."
—Romina Urra, associate editor of Metro Magazine

"Chocnut! It's as important as oxygen."
—Franco Mabanta, "Jasper" in the Coke ad

"Today, green tea ice cream and sour strawberry belts."
—Rico Blanco, Rivermaya

Ovalteenies

OVALTEENA tastes

"White chocolate tiramisu at Pepato. My guilty pleasure."
—Kate Torralba, fashion designer, musician and graduate student

"Not exactly an addiction but I think I'm the only one who likes Almond Joy and Mounds, and chocolates with coconut centres."
—Raffy Reyes, RX 93.1's news and features director

"Chocnut! *Sa murang halaga, napupunuan ko ang aking* chocolate craving."
—Kenikenken, cartoonist

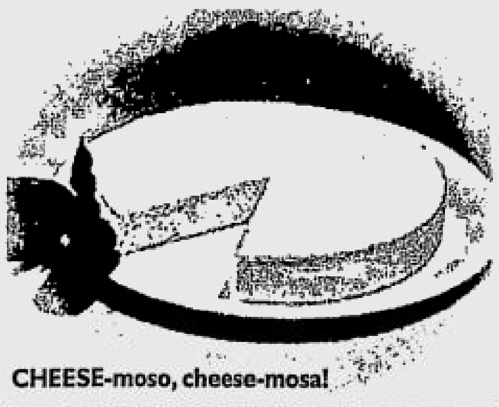
"Better Than Sex" from Gayuma Cafe in Katipunan."
—Shahani Gania, stylist, performance artist

"Haagen Dazs Macadamia. Lindt Pistache."
—Joel Trinidad, theater actor and one of the members of Silly People's Improvisational Theater

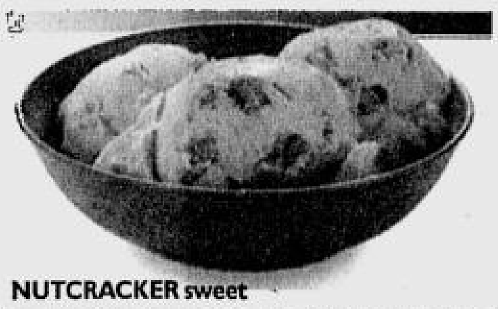
"I'm addicted to the Butter n Sugar Crepe at Cafe Breton. I used to get one after Mass at the Greenbelt Chapel every Saturday. It's inexpensive, it's easy to make and very simple. The complicated and fancy stuff takes a backseat to Butter n Sugar crepe! It's rock n roll—all drums and guitars, nothing more, nothing less. Give me something simple and I'm good to go! But my favorite dessert could be Myles Hernandez!"
—Bennii, Magic 89.9 DJ

"Classic snickers bar and Haagen Dazs' caramel cone explosion. Can't go wrong with these two."
—Bambam Aquino, TV host, youth advocate

"Rocky road ice cream, of course ...*basta may rock!*"
—Atom Henares, NU 107's head honcho



CHEESE-moso, cheese-mosa!



NUTCRACKER sweet

6 PACK
Almond Joy

ALMOND Moreno and Joy Marquez

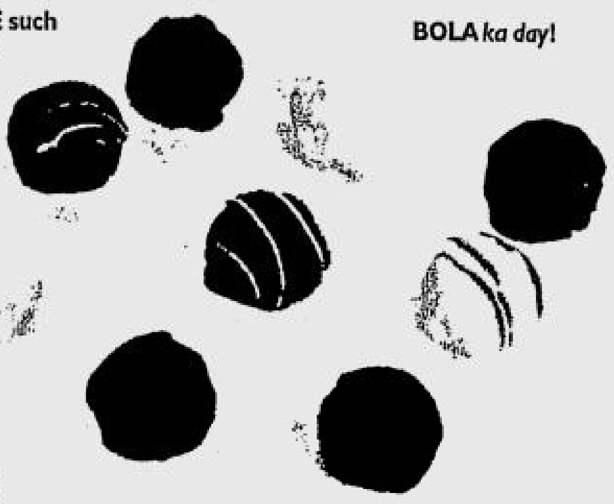
KING
Choc Nut
MILK CHOCOLATE

CHOC lang, pre'

ReeseSticks

STICK it up your... mouth!

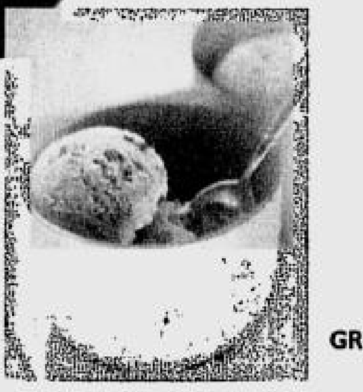
YOU'RE such a crepe!



BOLA *ka day!*

SNICKERS
Chill mo bulawinka & Wins

SNICK-snick *mo!*



GREEN, go!

Top Execs Show Their Moves at the Microsoft Tennis Challenge

Microsoft Philippines' realizing potential philosophy jumped out of product packaging and into the tennis court as top level execs realized their serve and volley prowess at the **Microsoft Executive Tennis Challenge** held at the Manila Polo Club.

1987 Wimbledon champion and two-time Davis Cup winner Pat Cash shared a few professional pointers to the players of the **Microsoft Executive Tennis Challenge** before the elimination rounds. Participants were treated to the same coaching tennis clinic received by tennis stars **Greg Rusedski** and **Mark Philipoussis.**

Joining Pat Cash from The Land Down Under were **Dr. Gavin Hopper** and his daughter, **Jade.** Dr. Hopper, who has coached several tennis notables including Monica Seles and Tommy Haas, is Pat's partner in conducting tennis clinics at the Cash-Hopper Academy at the Gold Coast.

At the young age of 12, Jade, is already a tennis star-in-waiting as she is ranked the No. 1 player in her age division. Jade is also one of the youngest players to sign an international sponsorship deal to travel and play tennis around the world (she signed up with clothing company Fila). Being groomed to be a professional player, Jade shared with us her routine that earned her the recognition: training six hours a day with dad.

The mixed doubles games paired each business executive with a local tennis pro. It was a close semi-finals game with **Ramon Quisumbing** of the Quisumbing-Torres Law Office and tennis pro partner **Mike Mora** up against Smith-Bell & Co. CEO **Fausto Preysler Jr.** and tennis pro **Derick Santos,** Director of ING. Preysler and Santos claimed the top prize and had the opportunity for a special match against Pat Cash and his CEO partner **Hans Sicat,** Country President of **Salomon Salmon Barney.**

Other local professional tennis players present at the event were top seeds **Johnny Arcilla, Felix Barrientos, Raymond Suarez, Roland So** and **Joseph Victorino.**

Beeyong Sison and **Martin Misa** organized the event.

Part of the business of the day was family business. Athlete and celebrity **Bea Lucero's** cute kids received much attention in the bleachers as they cheered for dad **Jean Henry Lhuiller. Marilou Batchelor's** brood turned pep squad, cheering her on to the quarter finals.

Other executives and CEOs who have shown their fighting swing and a winning attitude on the court were: **Edmund Fortunado,** Managing Director of Analog Devices; **Victor Lim Jr.,** EVP of Asia United Bank; **James Amatavivadhana,** Philippine Division President of Coca Cola Far East Limited; **Genaro Lapez,** President of Coca-Cola Phils.; **Rueben Pangan,** VP for Sales Marketing of FedEx; **Rodelio Arcilla,** President Filinvest Land Inc.; **Ernesto Tanmantiong,** EVP and **Willie Tan Untiong,** VP for Real Estate of Jollibee Foods Corp.; **Maximillian Oppacher,** Managing Director of Payment Processing Corp; **Edwin Haugh,** Director of ADB; **Jean Henry Lhuillier,** CEO of PJ Lhuillier Group of Companies; **Jon Jon San Agustin,** Senior VP of PLDT; **Paul Hartley,** Operations Director SPI Technologies; **Jenny Ligones,** Sales Director of SAP; **Ed Feist** of ABBOTT; **Girlie Lapez; Irene Ibanez; Annie Ayllon; Freddie Bernardo,** VP of iBank; and **Stephen Sy,** SVP of STSI of Metrobank.

The Microsoft Executive Tennis Challenge was sponsored by **Coca Cola, Dunlop-Slazenger, Philippine Airlines, PJ Lhuiller Group of Companies, Smart Communications, The Peninsula Manila and Union Bank.**

And the winners are: Champion team Derrick Santos and Fausto Preysler pose with Pat Cash and the runners-up, Ramon Quisumbing and Michael Mora. Also in the photo is Hans Sicat , Pat's doubles partner.

The Legend Speaks! Derrick Santos looks on.

The Microsoft family during the thank you dinner for the Aussie champs. L-R: Dr. Gavin Hopper, Tep Misa, Erick Olavides, Ria Sardua-Tan, Jesine Bustalino, Pat Cash, Jade Hopper, Michelle Kagabastian, Pepeng Rollan, Raymund Acedera, Rachel Fune, Mae Rivera, and Rolly Mariano.

Joseph Victorino smashes a winner while partner Ed Feist watches with glee.

Tennis guru Dr. Gavin Hopper demonstrates a winning volley during the clinic.

Pat enjoying the game during the Challenge Match with partner Hans Sicat.

Pat and Gavin organizes the clinic.

Facing the tough media challenge, Pat Cash fields questions from the press. With him are (L-R): Microsoft Marketing Communications Manager Mae Rivera, Beeyong Sison, former top seed Felix Barrientos and Microsoft EPG Director Pepeng Rollan.

Rie Sardua Tan, Tep Misa and Beeyong Sison shares a light moment with Director of Cash - Hopper Academy, Terry Saunders.

Pat enjoying dinner with Jean Henri Lhuillier and wife Olympian Bea Lucero Lhuillier.

Pat Cash persuading Bea's cubs to sign a multi year deal!

Participants gather and listen intently to Gavin Hopper during the clinic.

Felix Barrientos, Jade Hopper, William Tanmantiong and Ernesto Tan Untiong of Jollibee are all smiles during the event .

L-R: Austrian Ambassador Christian Krepela, Ed Haugh, Pat Cash, Ed Feist, Rueben Pangan, Hans Sicat and pro Anthony Tordesillas.

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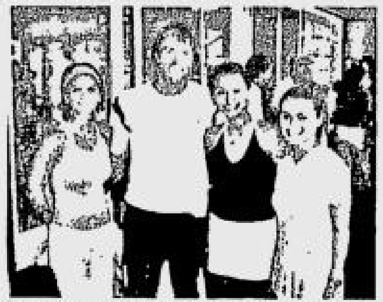
Tournament brainchild Tep Misa of Microsoft with Pat.



Dyan Castillejo-Garcia, Pat, Annie Ayllon, and Marilu Batchelor smile for the camera.

Vic Lim watches Jade Hopper in awe.

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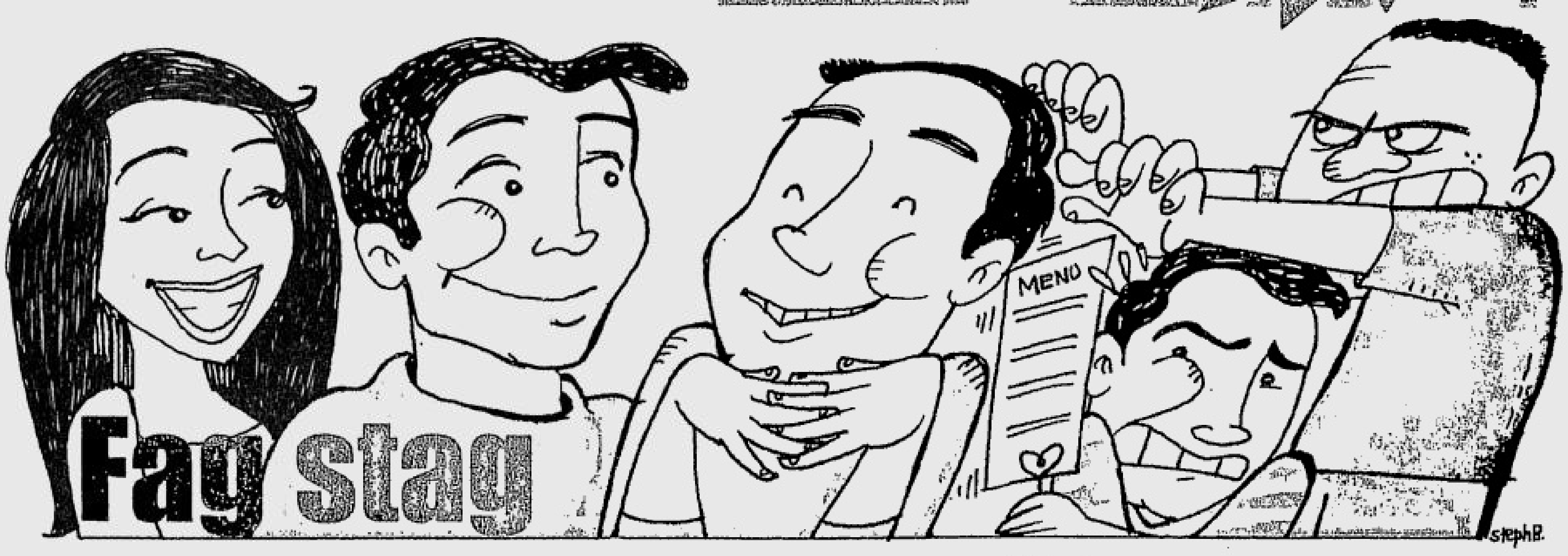


Fag stag

Most straight Pinoy men are terrified of gay people. Why do I love them?

SWAK!

by Lex

I AM a fag stag. There aren't many of us around in this little fishbowl called Manila. Most men are too busy wooing as many women as possible to constantly prove their masculinity. *Barkada* bonding is usually done with San Miguel beer in hand while naked women dance on stage. Thus the fag stag, defined as the straight guy who enjoys the company of gay people, is truly a minority.

Most straight Pinoy men are terrified of gay people. The mere sighting of a group of *badings* instigates either catcalls or out and out violence: "*Grabe pare*, did you see that? That fag was staring at my butt. *Upakan na natin…*"

Why do Filipino males feel this threatened? Is there nothing we can learn from gay people?

The biggest misconception about gay men is that all they want to do is sleep with straight guys. Once these macho males figure out that being gay is not just about sex, then the effort to bridge gaps is already half-accomplished.

Common experience

I have long concluded that the most colorful people are those with the most varied experiences. People who have traveled, or lived abroad, and understood different cultures, benefit from and enjoy an unusual perspective. Also interesting are those who have furthered their knowledge through academic education, and thus provide a peek into another world. But the most fascinating are those who have faced and transcended a lot of pain.

I suppose this is why gay people have always been engaging for me. Regardless of economic class or nationality, all gays and lesbians are bound by hardship. First, they have to struggle with themselves to either accept or deny their sexual orientation. After coming to terms with this personal experience, they have to deal with the effect that it has on the world around them.

Attending an all-male high school, I have seen the daily physical and emotional torment that my gay classmates had to undergo. On top of the terrible isolation, coming out to their family often posed an even bigger challenge. It is not easy for macho dads and conservative moms to immediately accept their gay children's "deviant" sexual orientation.

As the saying goes: "The strongest steel is tempered in the hottest fire." Thus I find that gay people, who faced rejection from everywhere and still came out on top, often have a depth of character rarely seen in their straight counterparts.

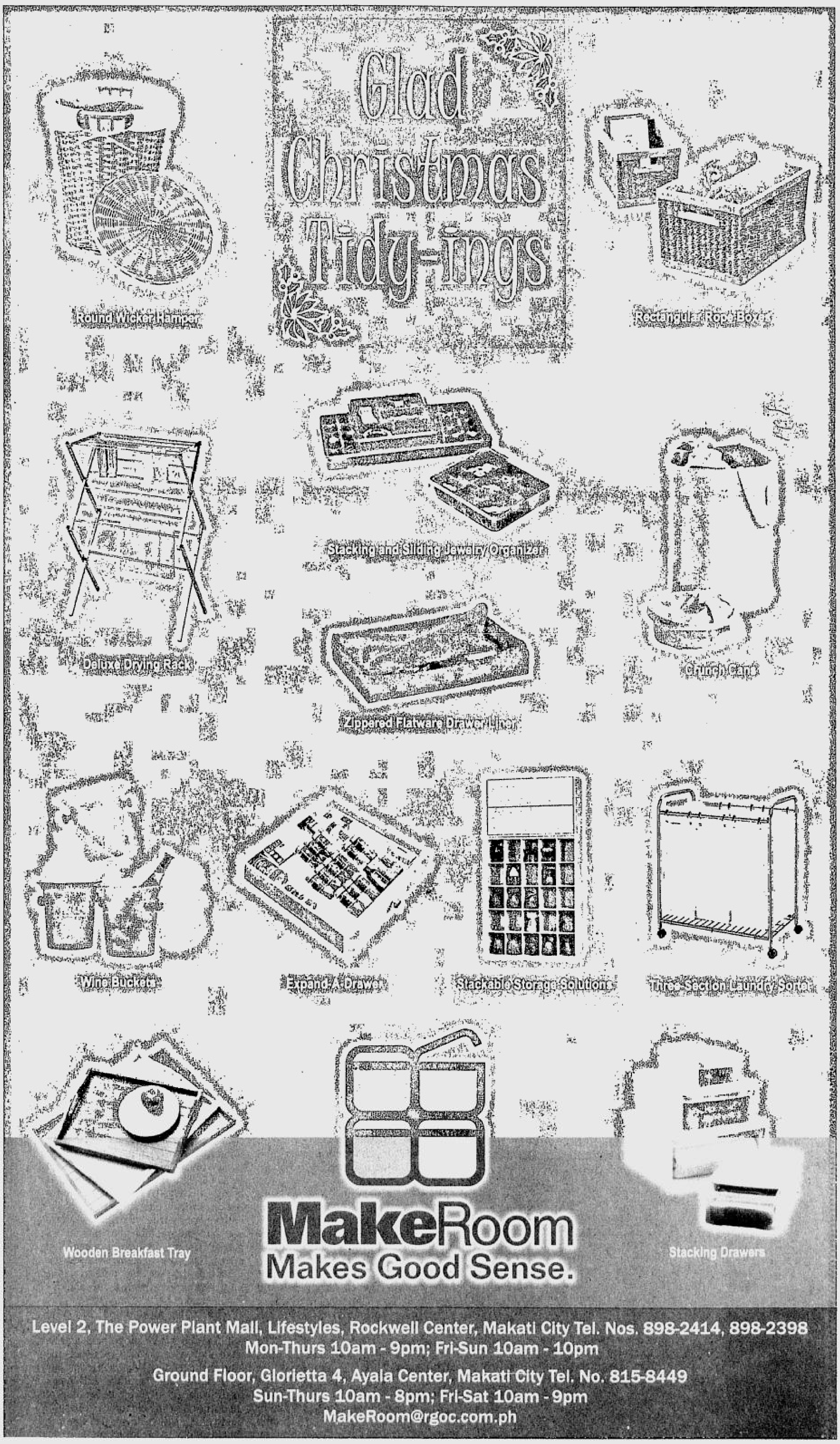
Media mold

Not all gays act like the gay characters essayed by Rhoderick Paulate, and honestly I am saddened when I see the way homosexuals are portrayed on TV and in the movies. They are always Palengkera Parloristas with loud voices and over-the-top costumes. Gays in the media are usually caricatures, not characters. Thus, when we see gay people in real life many do as they see on TV, and mock them.

I find this especially strange because the entire show biz world teems with gay people in positions of power, and yet the number of strong, gay characters onscreen are few and far between.

The stereotypical Pinoy male womanizes, drinks, gambles, and goes out of his way to oppress gay people. Meanwhile,they expect their women to be virginal, pious, and subservient. Rather than upholding this double-standard I prefer gay company, where there is love for diversity and freedom of expression. Is that really so strange?

(For comments e-mail: swak@info.com.ph)



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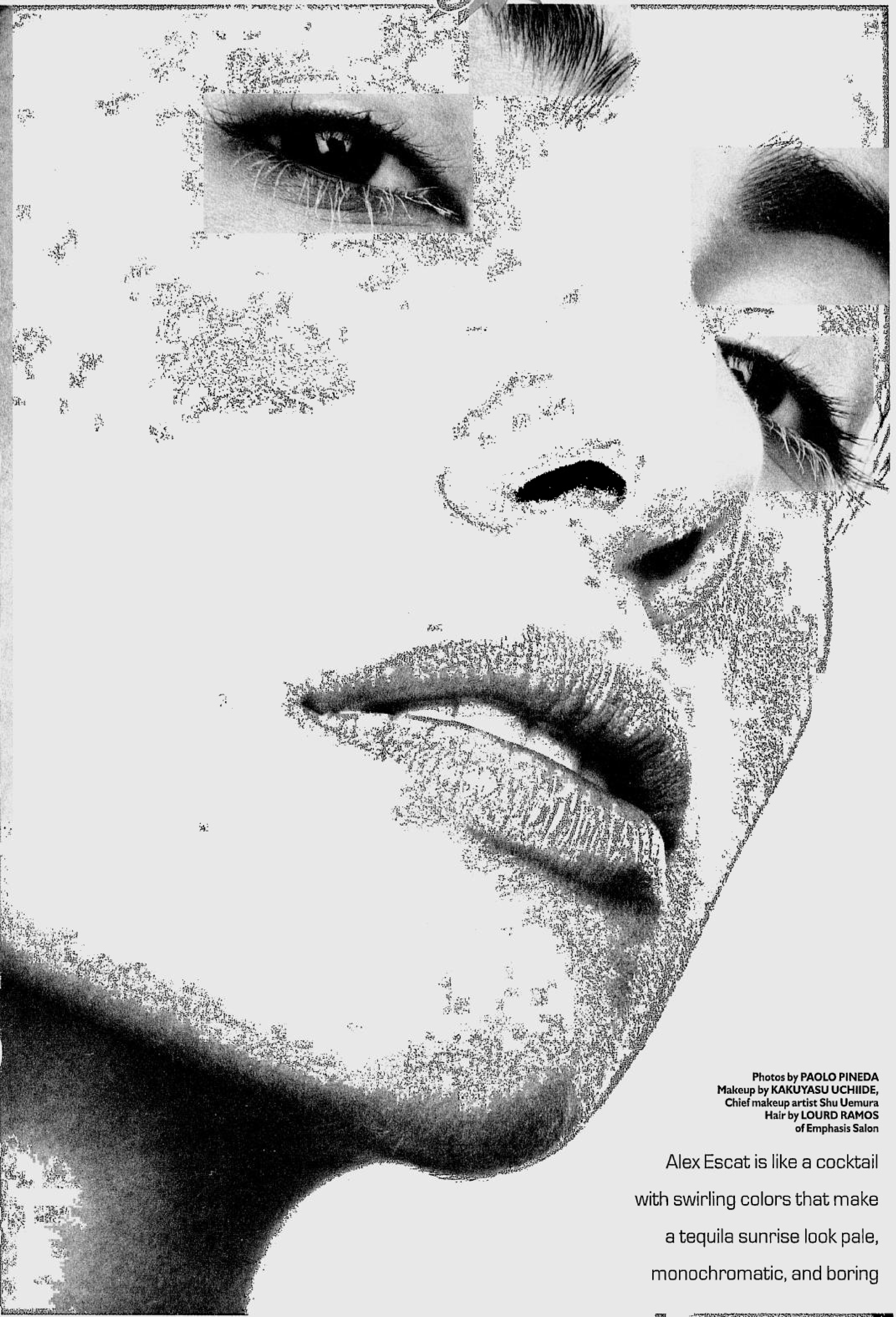


Photos by **PAOLO PINEDA**
Makeup by **KAKUYASU UCHIIDE,**
Chief makeup artist Shu Uemura
Hair by **LOURD RAMOS**
of Emphasis Salon

Alex Escat is like a cocktail with swirling colors that make a tequila sunrise look pale, monochromatic, and boring

By Stephanie Zubiri
Contributor

IT IS my belief that people could be described like beverages. There are those who are like Scotch—deep, masculine and strong. There are some that are virginal and pure, non-alcoholic and bland, non-intoxicating.

Alex Escat is definitely some sort of a cocktail. The kind of cocktail that is innocently deceptive, with an intriguing blend of exotic fruits and an 18-year-old blend of modern urban liqueur. She's the cocktail with swirling colors that make a tequila sunrise look pale and boringly monochromatic. You see, Alex has been my best friend for the past few years, so if there's anyone I know inside and out, it is she.

Alex may not be coming on full force now, but just wait a few months and she'll hit you hard, just like a ... cocktail! She'll get you deliciously intoxicated, and then leave you with an incurable hang over.

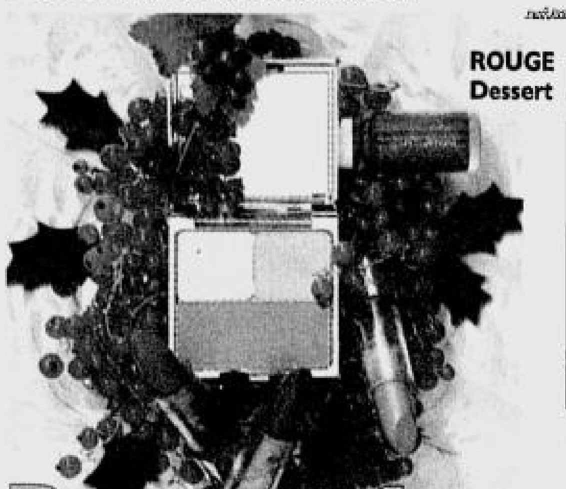
Her beautiful Eurasian face has graced countless ads and billboards. We first saw her in the very beginning of Smart Telecom's aggressive ad campaign; then as the Pond's model whose luscious skin everybody wanted to touch. Apart from that, she's a regular in Manila's catwalk scene. One might she is the embodiment of the new millennium's modern woman.

The czarina

Notoriously single and loving it, she has become a pop icon for Filipino society because she's broken the Maria Clara mold with the biggest and most stylish sledgehammer ever. She's known for her independence that stems from her intelligence, strong will and passion for life. These qualities, unfortunately, are not synonymous with Filipinas in general. Petit à petit, our conservative society is embracing the idea of the Independent Woman. Over time, Filipinas have become stronger, bolder and more beautiful. Alex is one of the pioneers.

The Czarina Alexandra (as I like to call her) proves that women have the right to live life freely and explore all aspects of it. This is why I say she's a cocktail. She's not just one thing, but many things! She loves the martini-swishing scene as much as racing horses, cowboy-style, with me in the boonies. She's a nature-loving bohemian and *fashionista*, European and Asian at once, artistic and practical—plus, she speaks four languages and learning Japanese! But what truly sets her apart and places her in iconic light is the fact that she likes being in charge of her life, paying for her drinks and being single, and yet she still believes in true love. She and I have watched innumerable old movies together, sighing in unison when that screen kiss close up comes on. Alex understands the fact that there is a time and place for everything in life, and this is what makes her so complete.

Alex is the cocktail that is out to shake the world and leave its mark, the kind that pushes cosmopolitans and lychee martinis back to the stone age, the kind that becomes a classic. Her beauty goes far beyond her face and pours forth from the spirit of the woman of the future that she embodies. It has the bold color, distinct flavor and strength that keep 'em asking for more.



ROUGE Dessert

CHIEF makeup artist Mr. Uchiide and his models

THE FACE as his canvas

Mr. Uchide at work backstage

Dessert for your face

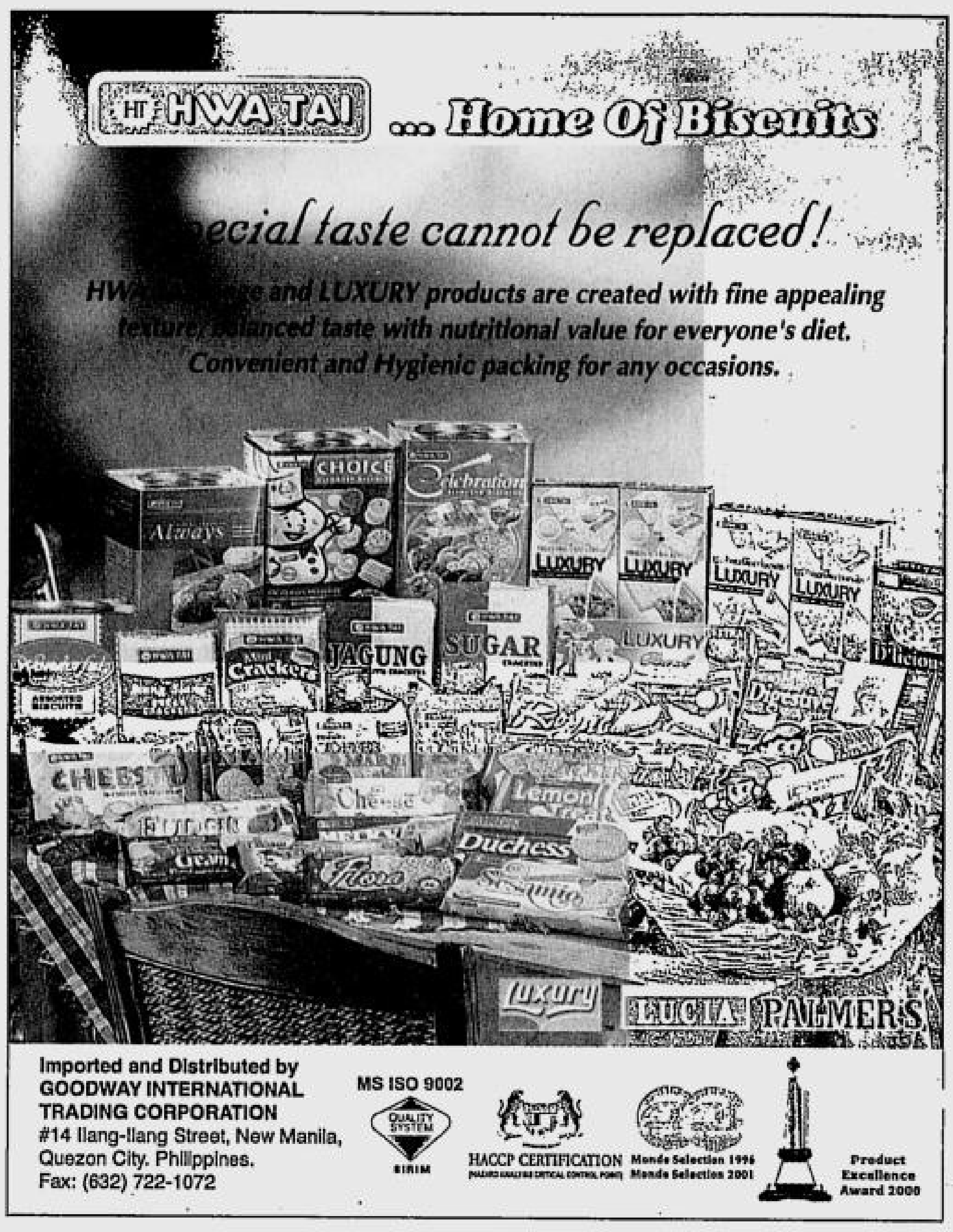
IN the spirit of giving people new and exciting things to look forward to every year, this Christmas Shu Uemura brings fans a Christmas collection good enough to eat—the Rouge Dessert Collection.

A collection inspired by the warm, rich taste of chocolate and the tangy, sumptuous colors of berries, Rouge Dessert is a sweet treat for every woman who wants to look and feel the spirit of Christmas.

From easy-to-use makeup palettes and Rouge 4 lipsticks in berry and chocolate tones, to makeup bags and even a fire-engine red makeup box, Rouge Dessert has something for every cosmetics junkie!

Famous for never repeating items and shades no matter how successful they are, Shu Uemura's Rouge Dessert Collection is again limited edition for this season only. Get your sugar rush now and take a bite of Rouge Dessert.

Shu Uemura products are now available in Rustan's Makati and Tower.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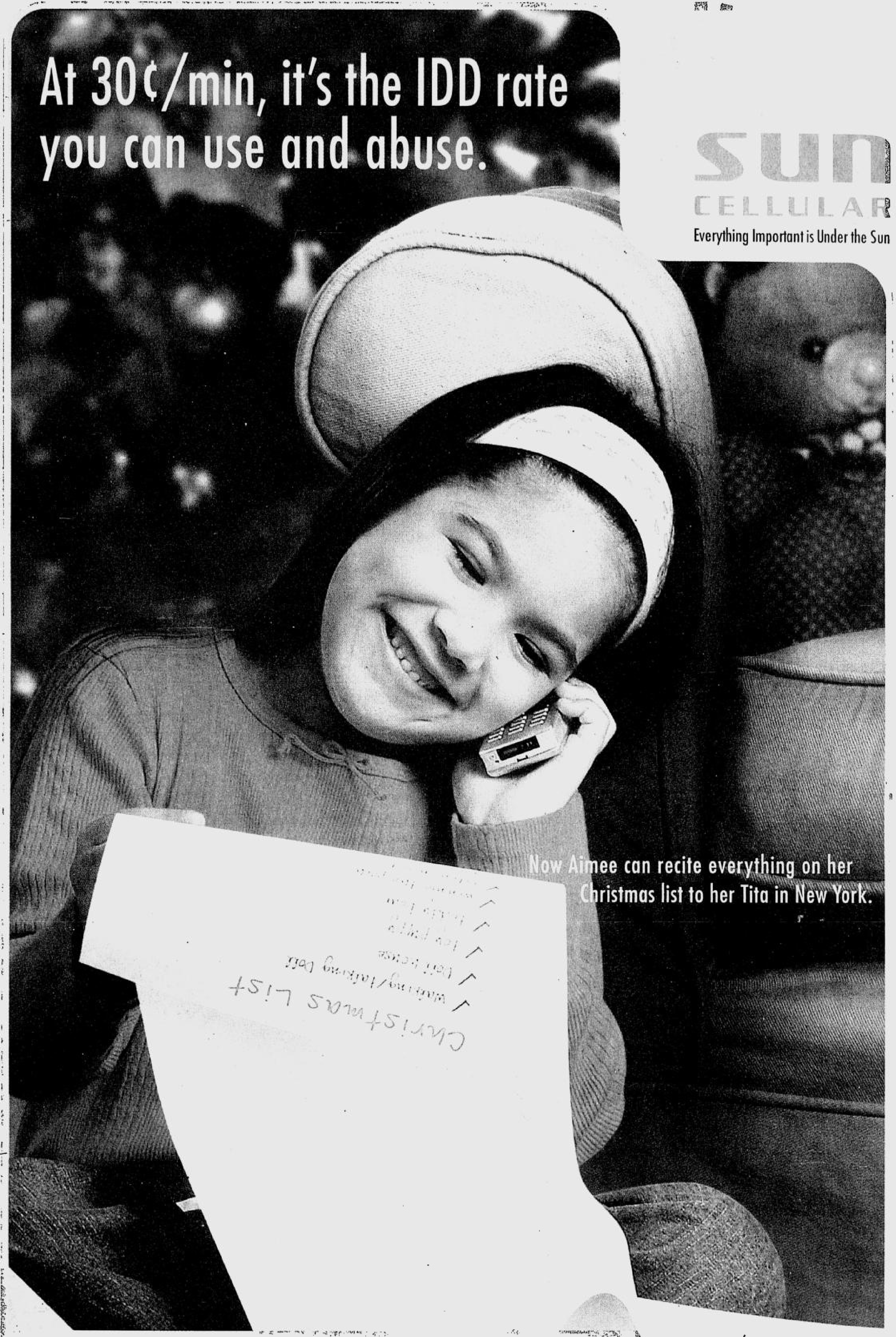
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The Sweet Sorrow

By Martin Valdes

> *"Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,*
> *That I shall say good night till it be morrow."*
> —Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare

"Good night, good night!
Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night
till it be morrow."
—Romeo and Juliet, William
Shakespeare

THE FIRST four months were excruciating. Leaving the comfortable familiarity of Manila for the unknown of Orlando, Florida, was one of the most difficult choices I ever had to make in all of my 21 years of expending oxygen.

In Manila I had a life that was well-suited to my character—a family that loved me, friends who laughed at my jokes, a girlfriend who put up with my quirks, and beer that I could afford. In short, I was happy. I left all this because I believed I could be happier still. The spirit of adventure beckoned and I responded, in search of greener pastures in the land of Red, White and Blue. The first four months almost killed me. I missed those who loved me and those I loved, as evidenced by an outrageous phone bill and excessive e-mails. I missed everything about Manila, from afternoon variety shows to the humid evenings, from the politically-incorrect *sisig* to the unadulterated genius of local rock acts. At the nadir of my depression, I realized that I even missed Kris Aquino. Those were bleak moments.

The element of evanescence is an integral part of existence. If you paid any attention to your Philosophy classes in college, you would remember this, and if you paid any attention to common sense you could confirm this. Living things, inanimate objects, the cosmos—all of these abide by the rule of the ephemeral, duration being an extremely flexible meter stick by which we measure time. A gadfly survives the slice of a single day, a mountain hunkers down for a hundred centuries, and the stars (as stars are wont to do) take their blessed time. But everything ends. Before anybody dares play the God gambit, allow me to capitulate and exempt the divine from the realm of mortality. I speak not of God but of His creation. Happy now, mom?

The world abounds with the symptoms of this tendency to change, to cease existing as is, and to evolve into something different. Nature demands that its denizens evolve; natural selection is the Machiavellian way by which life selects its next generation. Science, technology, architecture and art are concepts in motion, forever redefining a dynamic environment. Human beings, acting as both catalyst and catalyzed, are probably the best examples of the inevitable, and the necessary function of change. Within one lifetime, we undergo a veritable onslaught against the status quo. We take leave of our parents to challenge the world as adults, we sift through partners and peers as our needs mature, we acquire new skills and apply for alternative employment in the hopes of attaining satisfaction, and sometimes we relocate to foreign territories. We are a kinetic species. But if change is all good and natural, why does it hurt so much?

Incredible characters

Everybody, at some point, has had to confront a major change. In my case, several

THE SWEET/ N2

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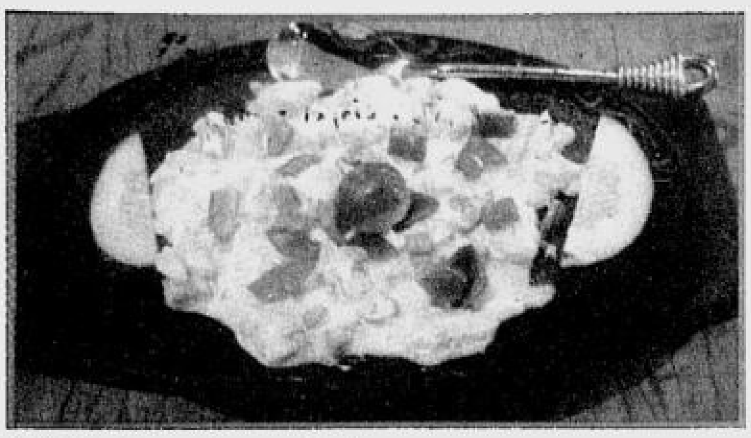
The sweetest fling with Marco Lobregat @ JUANSOY

TINA TASTES

by Tina Pamintuan



PERFECT TASTE. 'Bangus Sisig'

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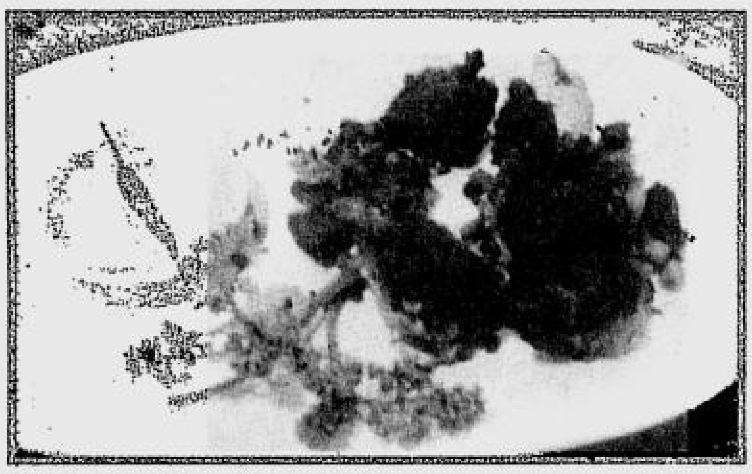
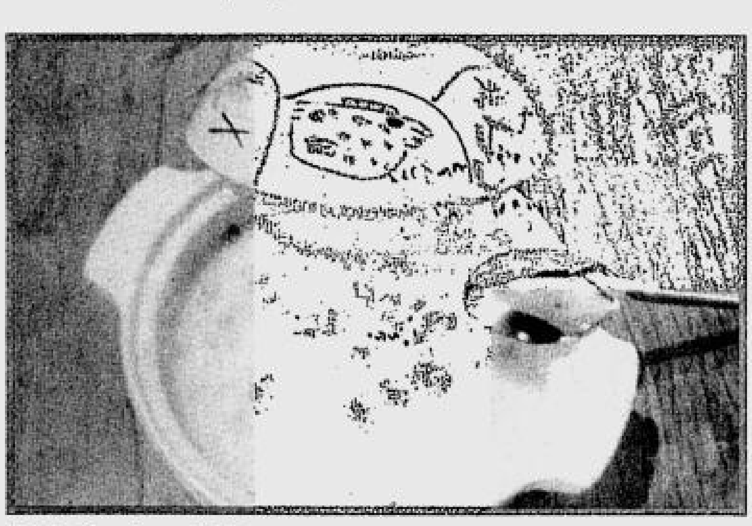


STEVE'S Beef Ribs. Sinful, satisfying.

BARENAKED. 'Lumpiang hubad'



FOOD for the gods? Beer soup

LOSING my religion: dating younger men

It used to be looked down upon—it was even considered taboo for women. But if Demi Moore, Cameron Diaz and even Pops Fernandez can do it, I want in too. Let's all join the club!

The boy

I was 16 and a college freshman at La Salle when I first met Marco Lobregat. He was a cute but constant pest, always disturbing me and my blockmates as we tried to work on school projects. Celso, as I knew him then, was the twelve-year-old kid brother of my classmate Louie. We would do our work in their *lola's* house because it was near school. Almost everyday, *kulit* Celso would be monkeying around, annoying his sister like most younger siblings tend to do.

When Rockwell first opened years after, Luis Espiritu, who used to run a top modelling agency, spotted Marco and whispered to me that he was one of the upcoming hotties. I realized that Marco was Celso. The little boy I used to know was all grown up and looking mighty fine.

But it's one thing to look and another thing to touch.

That was just against my religion. Even dating someone my age was not cool, until I get older and younger men just seem more appetizing!

The place

Located on a strip of food stalls and restaurants in Greenbelt 1, Juansoy is the star of the show. Newly opened after moving from its previous location near the cinema in the old food hall, Juansoy stands out and automatically catches attention with its eminent identity. When you're inside, you almost forget that you're inside a mall. Bright orange and blue-painted walls and far out art installations. There's a fiberglass and resin naked man on all fours and another one suspended from the ceiling. Most tables have legs that are actually lighted legs of a person. Eric Barro, owner of Juansoy, describes the dining experience at his restaurant as "casual Pinoy dining amidst art. "It's funky and it's eccentric but in good taste. The food tastes even better.

The date

We started with the eggplant caviar, smoked or grilled eggplant without the skin. The usual garnishes—tomatoes, pungent onions and ginger—balance the flavors evenly. Their version comes with crackers, nachos and sour cream. It's like eating healthy junk food.

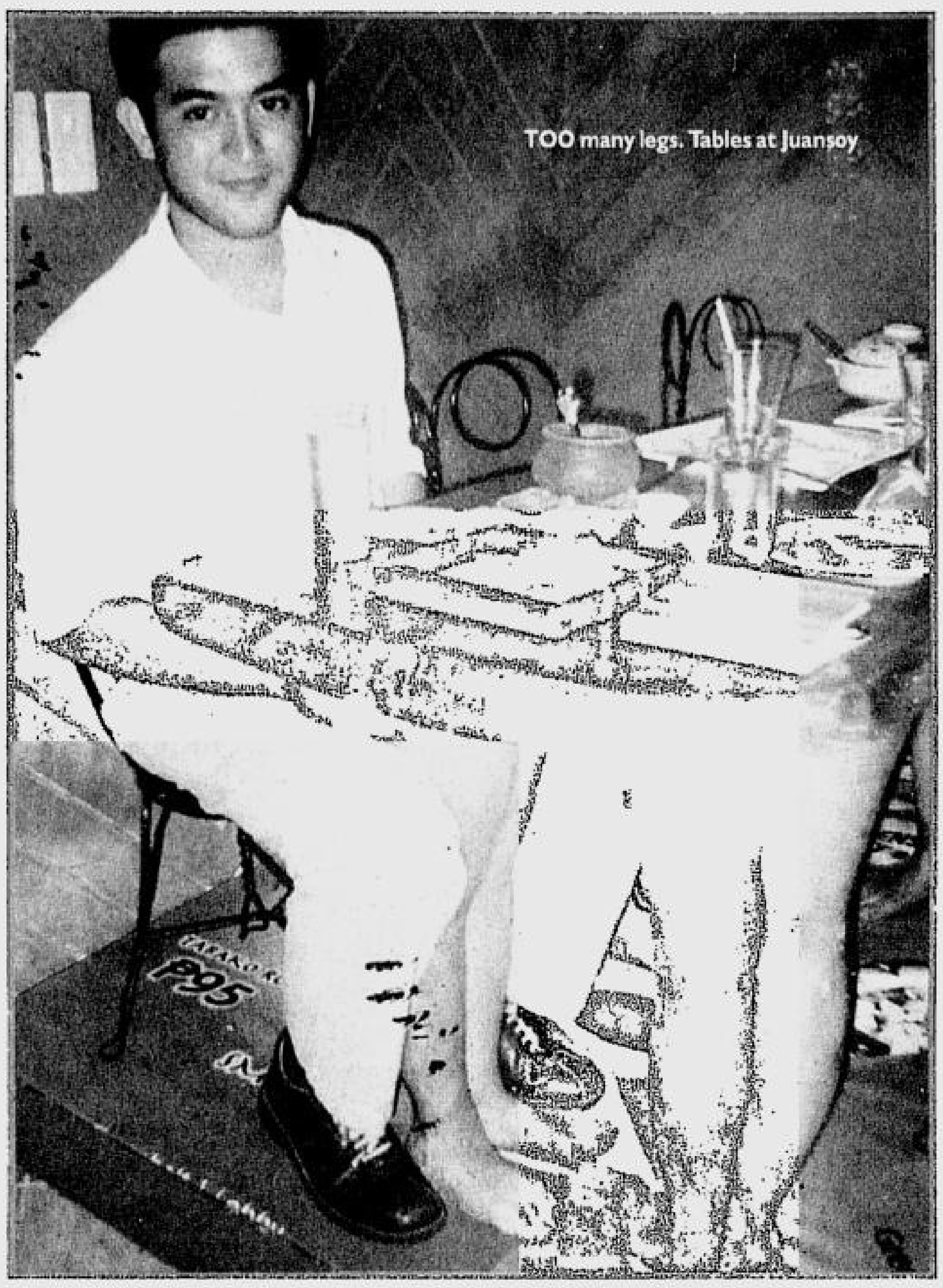
I love it when people take a chance on non-traditional ways of combining ingredients. Celso and I enjoyed the beer soup the most. This recipe is supposedly a monastery secret. What sneaky priests!

It was my first time to try beer in soup. Usually, when beer is cooked, it is done very thoroughly because of the bitterness of the alcohol. But in this recipe, you can distinctly taste the beer. This soup is one of a kind! Celso even knew that it was pale pilsen and not light because the full bodied flavor was present. Mixing the beer with the broth, mushrooms and a very light dairy product lifts the heaviness of the soup.

My top two things on the menu are the *lumpiang hubad* because without the wrapper, vegetables sweat and eventually caramelize when sauteed over time and fire. It was topped with sweet *kamote* cooked like French fries that complemented the dish. I was so content with its flavors that I didn't even need the sauce. It was the same thing with the *bangus sisig*—the seasoning need not any tampering. I would say this dish suits perfectly the Pinoy palate.

Struggling to make conversation whilst sampling a total of eight dishes, and a never ending amount of refillable homemade vanilla iced tea.

It's so hard to keep your poise while eating crispy beef ribs. But they were excellent! There was one left one the plate, which I call the *hiya* piece. Celso is the shy type when it comes to girls he likes. But with food, he voluntarily took the last piece with no hesitations.



TOO many legs. Tables at Juansoy

He admits to preferring more mature women especially because he's always been around older people in general. Or was he just saying that for my benefit?

I had to ask him to enumerate his reasons.

1. "They usually know what they want."
2. "They can teach and I can learn."
3. "The challenge."
4. "(I'd choose a) woman over girls any day."
5. "Less games are played."
6. "They automatically feel like they have the upper hand and that makes things much easier."
7. "They usually have their own lives, are more independent and are not needy."
8. "The level of conversation is usually higher and the tone of voice lower, sexier."
9. "Curfews are out of the question."
10. "Women are comfortable being on top!"

DON'T CALL me, I'll call you on MyGlobe

Pinoy fondue confessions

We ended our meal with confessions and Pinoy fondue. Fondue is a Swiss version of hotpot. The dessert version is pieces of fruit or cake served with chocolate for dipping. They also do it with bread and melted cheese. In Juansoy, slices of local Pinoy fruits like papaya, mango, banana and pineapple are used instead of apples. They are served with hot melted chocnut, perfectly presented in a mini *palayok* over fire.

I confessed that I once dated a 19-year-old (just don't ask me when). I should be proud to be on a date w/ Celso, who is 22.

Other people would kill to be in my shoes. He's one of Cosmo's 69 most eligible bachelors. He also has a portfolio of commercial endorsements—Globe, Colgate, Coke, Nova, Gee Your Hair Smells Terrific, Penshoppe and MTV.

Juansoy is a great casual date place, especially when you're not sure if it's a date or not! The atmosphere is very cozy, lively and unpretentious.

The people behind the place go the extra mile in not just giving customers original-tasting and delicious food that won't abuse your wallet. They have also created an atmosphere for service with a very amicable staff and entertainment that you usually have to pay more for.

What: **Juansoy**
Where: **Ground floor, Greenbelt 1**
When: **everyday 7 a.m. - 10 p.m.**
How much: **P200-250/head**
Contact: **(02) 894-4566**

Questions, comments and suggestions: tina_tastes@yahoo.com

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The Sweet Sorrow

From page N1

drastic upheavals have contributed to the motley equation that is my current personality. Leaving home for the United States was just one example. Quitting my job in Orlando and heading to Australia was another. But the most painful experiences I have ever endured involved saying goodbye to important people in my life, knowing I may never see them again. My lifestyle has provided me ample opportunity to meet some incredible characters, beautiful folk who have contributed generously to my world perspective: Amy, from Vancouver, who wrote Sonnets in the Sand, and then waited patiently for the tide to reclaim her borrowed canvas; Kerry the Dubliner, who liked nothing better than a savage debate on everything; Pete, the Aussie café owner, who bartered cups of coffee for good music; Liam and Alex, the British nomads, who have explored more of this planet than is good for them. These are but a few unforgettable portraits that hang in the museum of my memory.

They say that you can know a person by the company he keeps—these people flatter my reputation. And taking my leave of them was an exercise in sorrow. The final beer at the pub, the last wave before the train pulled away, the swan song smile as a friend disappears behind airport security, these salutations sear beyond the physical. The possibility that there might not be a second chance always left me heartbroken.

The pain is selfish. For the same reason I fall in love or patronize a bar, or rabidly consume Haruki Murakami novels, I want these people to remain in my life because they make me feel good. Like a forsaken lover, I am envious of their present company, wherever they are. I have always promised to keep in touch, tried to save money for the eventual visit, to linger on the nostalgia, and to bolster my confidence by regularly reminding myself that "We had something special." The void is deeper than Bill Gates' pockets.

Personal Evolution

This has happened many times before and it doesn't get any easier. Changing lifestyles, meeting and leaving people, moving around the world, it always results in heartache. So why do I do it? Why not just stay in one place, keep a steady job, and restrict acquaintances to my current demographic?

Simply because I cannot. Humans have come a long way from etching on cavern walls, but I feel my own personal evolution has only begun. One day, I hope to settle into a more consistent mode of living, but for now, I pursue my Darwinian instincts. The desire to experience the world is of a reciprocal nature. I need to travel, because I have so much of the Philippines to share. I need to try out other things, because only then can I appreciate my present circumstances. I need to meet new people and hear their mythos, because I have stories of my own. To trade recipes, compare cultural traditions, debate religion, concur on the incompetence of our governments—interaction is a conduit that is mutually beneficial.

The pain of separation is necessary. There is no way to avoid it. But I guess it is all a matter of perspective. If the experience is genuine, then it will survive the rigors of time and distance. The people I have met will reside in the beaches and pubs of my memory, the places I have cherished will be stamped on the communal passport of all travelers, and the things that I have done will acquire permanence in my future achievements. In a sense, I will never again "leave," I will just take these experiences with me. With that out of the way, I can stop worrying about my departures, and start focusing on my arrivals.

(E-mail author at lasengnomad@yahoo.com)

Changing lifestyles, meeting and leaving people, moving around the world, it always results in heartache. So why do I do it?

SO, lunch in Vienna, two years from Tuesday?

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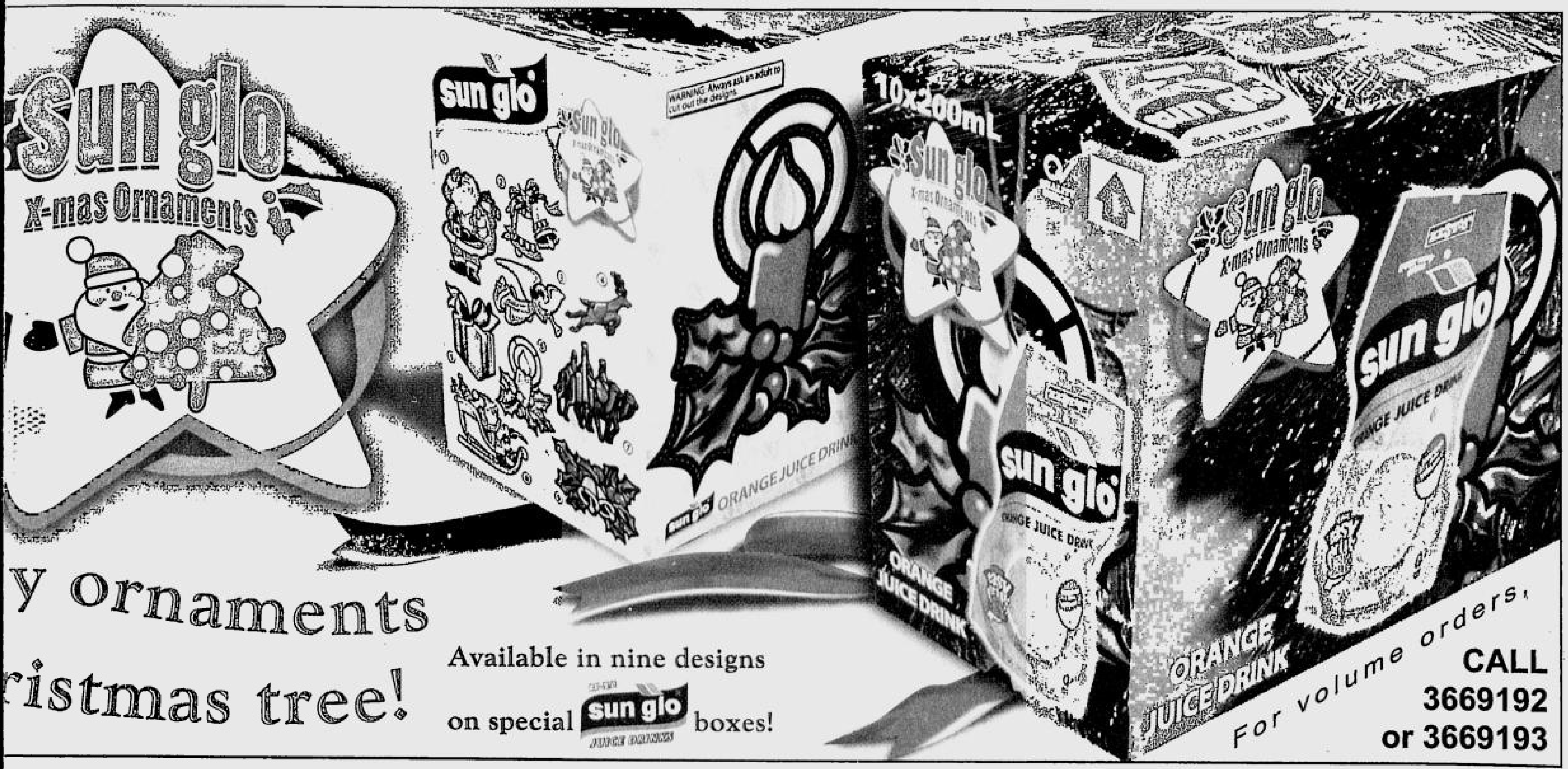

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Return of the Pinoy super hero!

By Lino Cayetano
Contributor

THE PINOY superhero is making a comeback. In the next few weeks, we will be seeing Bong Revilla as "Captain Barbel," Vhong Navarro as "Gagambaboy," and Vic Sotto as "Fantastic Man." The three films will be competing alongside more traditional Filipino epic dramas for a share of holiday audiences.

How will the movie-going public react to the re-introduction of superheroes to Philippine cinema? And how will these three films treat the genre? Will they limit themselves, as Hollywood does, to production design and special effects, or will they incorporate more traditional Filipino elements of story telling, subject matter and aspiration?

Just like their foreign counterparts, we expect that "Gagambaboy", "Captain Barbel" and "Fantastic Man" will make money. From the previews and posters that have been released, it also looks like all three films were made with the highest-quality special effects—by Pinoy standards. No doubt this is to impress upon our skeptical and Hollywood-reared movie-going public that we're up to the challenge.

Guarantee

These Pinoy superhero films may indeed succeed in making money and being entertaining, but will they be able to make a lasting and positive impact on Pinoy viewers and society? Will they be able to churn out something more profound than box office success?

In the United States, superhero films are guaranteed blockbusters. Yet the power and success of the superhero genre rests on the mark it makes on contemporary pop culture. Superman has always stood for both physical strength and strength of character. Batman has always been the gentleman with the tragic past. The X-men represent those who were judged, molded and shaped by a society that rejected mutants. There are superheroes for all kinds of problems. But Hollywood and the Philippines may be looking for two different kinds of heroes.

Superheroes are symbols of hope and strength but unlike the problems that our society faces today, these heroes have enemies that can be seen, felt and conquered. In their world, evil is embodied by a fierce-looking villain, usually one that is sly and seductive. The thrill and satisfaction of the Hollywood film lies in the assurance that the problems can, and will, be resolved by the story's end. The heroes will always be victorious and the conflict will always be ironed out. What we need in the Philippines are Pinoy heroes who can make us believe that there are answers to our own problems.

Ideally, the yearend Metro Manila Film Festival should be not only a box-office contest but a venue for ideas. This year there will be several dramas that will discuss Filipino family life, as usual. Will the superhero film also be able to offer something beyond entertainment, or will they remain as novelties or sideshows?

The genre should thrive on symbols, meaning and representation. It has the potential to lead us to a deeper understanding of social, cultural, even political problems. Let us hope that "Captain Barbell", "Fantastic Man" and "Gagambaboy" can do this.

> The genre has the potential to lead us to a deeper understanding of social, cultural, even political problems.

EDU Manzano as Captain Barbell

IT'S A stretch. Vic Sotto Lastikman

EVERY gym has one. Bong Revilla as another Captain Barbell

DING, *ang bato!* Nanette Medved as Darna

FROM Superbooba to superhero of the masses

GOOD enough to fry. Herbert Bautista as Commander Bawang

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SATURDAY Supercial

Fan-tabulous!

Sure, the holidays get really lonely when you're not in your own country. But if there's one upside to being far from home; it's celeb sightings. Twenty-five-year-old Christie Tan wrote from New York to share her encounters with Hollywood stars. We have only one thing to say: We're green with envy.

ON Broadway with Hugh Jackman outside his show "Urban Cowboy"

WITH Bai Ling

Hi, Super!,

Hope things are fab on your end.

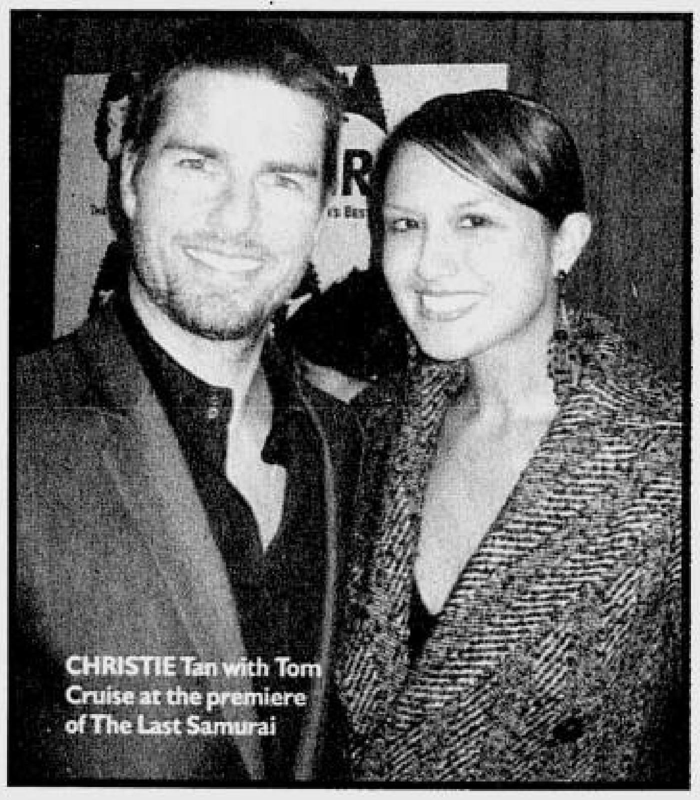
I got to meet Tom Cruise! How cool is that? I've had a crush on him since I saw Top Gun when I was eight! I have a 17-year-old onscreen "relationship" with Tom!

I went to the premiere of his new film, "The Last Samurai." My cousin from Warner scored some tickets. I went to the after-party, too, where I saw more stars. Wish you were there. It was just your kinda thing. I am soooo gonna clog your inbox with pictures of celebs. Hahaha!

Tom was really nice. I told him I was from the Philippines and he said he'd been there to shoot "Born on the Fourth of July" and that they stayed in Vigan. I told him that his example and beginnings inspired me and that he was my favorite actor. I stopped myself before I started raving about his work (I've seen all his movies and can enumerate them in the order of the year they were released) or telling him how amazing he looked. He complimented me on my dress. What he didn't know was that I was freezing underneath the sheer fabric of the flimsy, tiny number. It was 29 degrees out. Hahaha!

Write me back and tell me all about what you've been up to.

Hugs,
Christie



CHRISTIE Tan with Tom Cruise at the premiere of The Last Samurai

WITH Ken Watanabe

WITH Tony Goldwyn

WITH Hiroyuki Sanada

Do you have celeb sightings you want to brag about? Drop us a line and send us pictures, too! E-mail us at super@inquirer.com.ph.

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vishes this Christmas!

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Just present your receipt or charge slip (for purchases made from November 20, 2003 to January 15, 2004) with your AIG or Dolce Vita credit card at Rustan's Shangri-la, Rustan's Makati, or Rustan's Alabang Town Center to join the raffle.

Just cross your fingers and hope that you will be one of the five lucky winners who will shop like crazy at Rustan's – but who needs to hope? Using your AIG or Dolce Vita card already improves your chances of winning five times! It's part of our endless treats to you...more value for money, lower interest rates, year-round promos, and hundreds of major freebies!

Plus, experience pure shopping pleasure with AIG's 0% installment plan on three and six month tenors on regular and X items.

Shop and join

AIG Credit Cards *and* **Rustan's**

500K Christmas

P500,000 WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE WON

AIG and Dolce Vita Cardholders get 5 times more chances of winning.

Promo runs from November 20, 2003 to January 20, 2004.

In cooperation with

*5 winners of P100,000 worth of Rustan's Department Store Gift Certificates

See flyers for details.
Per DTI NCR-Permit No. 3415. Series of 2003.

AIG Credit Cards

A delectable treat on your Christmas feast for FREE!*

Charge all groceries from ANY SUPERMARKET to your AIG Credit Card or Dolce Vita Card.

*FRUIT SALAD PACK
Two (2) 850g cans of Fiesta Fruit Cocktail and one (1) 200ml Fruit Salad Cream

Rustan SUPERMARKETS

Value Grocer

A sweet treat for every swipe!

Get a free fruit salad pack just by using your AIG Credit Card.

You can tell the cashier not to ring your purchases of two 850g cans of Del Monte Fiesta Fruit Cocktail and one 200mL pack of Fruit Salad Cream – it's being paid by your AIG Credit Card.

Yes, it's a sweet treat from AIG Credit Cards – just use your card when buying your groceries and collect P5,000 worth of charge slips (each slip should at least be P1,000). Present them to the customer service booth of any Rustan's Supermarket or Express Lane and get your free Del Monte Fruit Salad Gift pack right then and there!

The Noche Buena treat lasts up to March 31 next year, allowing you to enjoy a delicious, creamy fruit salad for free well up into the heat of the summer! That's just our way of saying thank you for trusting AIG: the credit card that gives you even sweeter treats – lowest interest rates, tons of freebies, and year-round promos.

Enjoy your salad and Merry Christmas!

The Perfect Christmas Gift

It's about time you give your daughter a Dolce Vita Card!

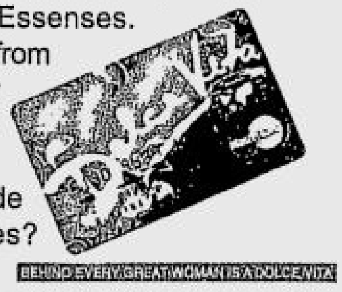
The Dolce Vita Card is the perfect card for any woman – with all the discounts she can get from pamper-me treats such as massages and body scrubs, salons, and in her domain: kitchen appliances. It's her ticket to heaven, but it does more than that. She can also rely on it to help her through emergencies...and while getting the best deals.

One emergency would be going out of town and suddenly, your daughter will need cash for a field trip. Well, here's good news! This wouldn't be a problem if you give your daughter an extension of your Dolce Vita card!

By giving your daughter, mother, sisters, and sisters-in-law an extension card, you arm them for emergencies and simultaneously simplify your schedule and responsibilities. And there's no better time to get them their extension cards but NOW! You can have up to four extension cards whose annual membership fees are waived for the first year!

And if that isn't good enough, every approved extension card application entitles you to a gift from NARS worth over P1,000. Whip up a new look by using your free lipstick, eyeshadow, blushers, and brushes from this premium cosmetic brand which is only available in Rustan's Essenses. Extension cardholders will also get a cologne imported from Spain! Just present your congratulatory letter and your Dolce Vita card at Rustan's Essenses and get your free makeup right away.

Who would've thought a credit card would provide you with great bonding time with your loved ones?



BEHIND EVERY GREAT WOMAN IS A DOLCE VITA

EXCLUSIVE 30% DISCOUNT ON DAY PASS TICKETS!

Feel the magic this holiday season.

Enchanted Kingdom

AIG Credit Cards

Promo Mechanics:
- Offer is applicable on Day Pass tickets purchased through AIG Credit Card or Dolce Vita Card.
- Approval of transaction is subject to AIG credit authorization criteria.
- Tickets may only be pre-purchased at Enchanted Kingdom's Makati Sales Office - G/F Tropical Palms Condominium, 103 dela Rosa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati. (Tel. No. 830-2111 to 16)
- Tickets are valid for 3 months from purchase date and cannot be for commercial use or re-sale.
- Maximum of 10 tickets daily per cardholder will be allowed.

Hurry! Promo valid from Dec. 15, 2003 to Mar. 31, 2004. Call 636-8600 for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-881. Series of 2003.

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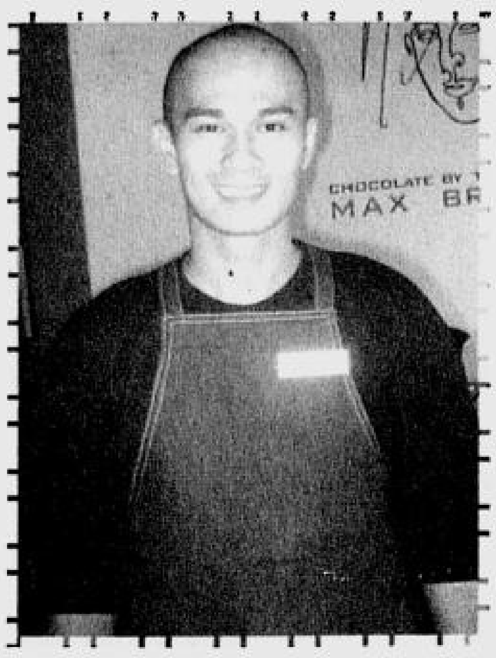


My name is... Marlon Solante.
The drink that best describes me is ... Hug Mug.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... pralines.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Sweety.
E-mail me at marlon.com; 09198625106.

My name is ... Joven PJ Balmeo.
The drink that best describes me is ... Magnet.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... Mudmax.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Sexual Chocolate.
E-mail me at joven_pogi2003@yahoo.com.

My name is ... Paul Jayson Po.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... Climax.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Neo-Baby.
E-mail me at paul_jayson_po@hotmail.com.

My name is ... Elize Reyes.
The drink that best describes me is ... Pure Chocolate Ice Blended.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... Chocolate Decadence.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Sweetie.
E-mail me at johnbeth1529@yahoo.com

Super friends!

Super Baristas

Meet your neighborhood's coffee experts, the sincere sweet smiling faces that greet us at our favorite cafes

COFFEE BEAN AND TEA LEAF (angels on whipped cream wings)—Jenina & Elize
MAX BRENNER(sexier than chocolate c-hunks)—Paul, Marlon, Joven & James
SEATTLES BEST (barista or artista—so photogenic) Julie Ann, Hermenigildo
CINNZEO (cinnamon dusted innocence)—Juliet
HAAGEN DAAZ (simply sweet with a cherry on top)—Sonia
SAN FRANCISCO COFFEE (flirty friends GRANDE)—JJ & Iya

My name is ... JJ Dinglasan.
The drink that best describes me i ... Espresso Complex. I'm strong and it takes a lot to understand me.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... flourless chocolate cake. Once you try, you can't stop.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Pangs. As in Panget.
E-mail me at jjfd2@yahoo.com

My name is... Juliet Mayuga.
The drink that best describes me is...Peca Roll because it's sweet and tasty.
If I were a sweet, I would be...ube kasi malambing at malambot.
My sweetheart would most likely call me...Hon. Kasi sobrang sweet nya.
E-mail me at 09182387847.

My name is... Herminigildo Casela Jr.
The drink that best describes me is...Cookie Javanilla because I'm smooth and a little bit hyper.
If I were a sweet, I would be...leche flan. I am very sweet with my family.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Babie Mahal. Sobrang baduy.
E-mail me at mrbikiniopen@yahoo.com.

My name is ... Iya Certeza.
The drink that best describes me is ... Extreme Latte. I like going to extremes.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... L'hirondelle (French choc-coated meringue). Very sweet and fragile.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... cotton candy.
E-mail me at iyapotzki@hotmail.com.

My name is ... Julie Ann Pepito.
The drink that best describes me is ... Seattle's Best Javanilla. Smooth and tasty.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... strawberry cheesecake. Sweet but sometimes bitter.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... honey pie.
E-mail me at julesfran@msn.com

My name is ... Janina M. Valeriano.
The drink that best describes me is ... Dark Chocolate Ice Blended.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... Chocolate Fudge Cake.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Honeybunch.
E-mail me at janina_315@yahoo.com

My name is ... James Acuña.
The drink that best describes me is ... Mexican Spicy.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... chocolate mousse.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Leng Leng.
E-mail me at jamespaulyacuña@yahoo.com.

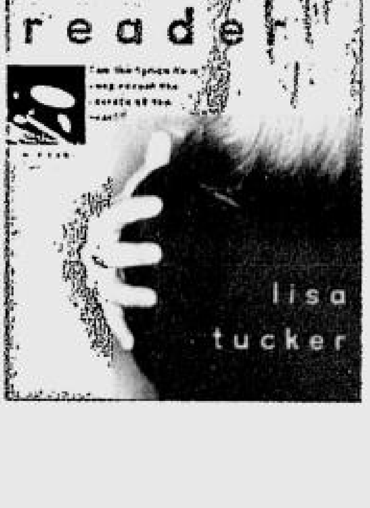
My name is ... Sonia Nicolas.
The drink that best describes me is ... Macadamia Nut Ice Cream. Nutty and so sweet.
If I were a sweet, I would be ... a souffle. Soft and yummy.
My sweetheart would most likely call me ... Honey.
E-mail me at mayrockwell@yahoo.com

Super! Selections

By Maui V. Reyes

Restaurant

There's no reason to scrounge around the metro for a 24-hour diner that serves gourmet breakfast after a hard night of partying. You have to, of course, reward yourself for being able to stay up all night. Head over to Il Ponticello—they now serve breakfast Tuesdays to Sundays, from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. Check out their Colazione Appetitosa (The Big Man's Breakfast), which includes tomato salad, toast and potato hash served with either homemade sausages, bacon, or cooked ham. It's almost worth getting up early for.



Book

The Song Reader by Lisa Tucker

Mary Beth is a song reader. Think of her as a shrink, only to analyze you, she uses the songs that you have stuck in your head. She and her younger sister LeeAnn are orphans who get by on their own—until one customer's secrets are revealed by Mary Beth, and the girls' peaceful lives begin to crumble. "The Song Reader" is narrated by LeeAnn, who takes us through trauma, heartache, and hope set to '70s tunes as she continues to struggle in understanding the workings of her sister's mind, and, eventually, hers.

CD

CAMBIO, Cambio EP

It's Ebe Dancel from Sugarfree, Kris Gorra-Dancel from Fatal Posporos, Diego Mapa of Monsterbot, Buddy Zabala of Twisted Halo and Raimund Marasigan of Squid 9 and <s>andwich. With a formula like that, how could you go wrong? Their EP has five foot-stomping rock tracks, including my fave, "DV", which has Mapa reading out various places around the metro and the band proclaiming Divisoria as the place to be. The EP goes for P150 a pop at each of the individual band members' gigs, which also includes "DV" remixes by Wolfmann and Philips BeDJ winner, Morse.

cambio
excerpt e.p.

DVD

"About Adam", Miramax 2000

Don't think it's an Irish version of "High Fidelity". In "About Adam", Kate Hudson plays Lucy, the youngest sister of four siblings, who thinks she's found the perfect man in Adam (played by equally hot Stuart Townsend). Little does Lucy know that Adam plays the perfect man to not only her, but to her two sisters and brother as well, adopting a different personality for each. It's when eldest sister Alice (Charlotte Bradley) uncovers Adam's secrets that we get the answers to every "why" we came up with while watching the movie. "About Adam" is a movie you'll either love or absolutely hate—but you can't deny that seeing Hudson deliver her lines in Irish opposite Townsend isn't rewarding enough.

"KATE HUDSON SHINES!"
"TWO THUMBS UP!"
about Adam
DVD

EVENT

The Christmas season means partying, and MTV found another reason to bring out those streamers. It's time for yet another MTV ASIA AWARDS Voting Party, and this year's venue is Dish at the Power Plant Mall, with performances by Barbie's Cradle, Parokya ni Edgar, and Rivermaya. And what party would be complete without goodie bags?! The first 300 party-goers get an MTV Asia Awards goodie bag! The shindig starts at 7:30 p.m.